Bengaluru Sunday, March 1, 2026 Pages 22 Vol 79 No 60 ₹8

DH on Sunday

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The Power of Good

India take on Windies in a must final Super Eights game

P9

Travel *Page18*

Art of chilling

Switzerland, known for its ski resorts and scenic rail routes, teaches you to enjoy the slow life

Art & Pursuits *Page20*

Ink over instant

A few traveller-artists are setting their phones aside and opening sketchbooks instead of chasing likes

Books *Page16*

Conquest & carnage

In this critically acclaimed work, a Yale professor examines the history of the human destruction of the Earth

Food & Drink *Page17*

Thai treats

From stir-fries and curries to its signature coffee, Phuket has a thriving culinary scene

WEST ASIA ON BOIL

- First strikes on Iran appeared to hit areas around the offices of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran later said Khamenei was alive
- Trump says US has begun "major combat operations in Iran" after Israel launched strikes, calls on the Iranian people to take over the government
- Iran's Defence Minister Amir Nasirzadeh is believed to have been killed in Israeli attacks, two sources familiar with Israel's military operations and one regional source said
- Attack on Iran disrupts flights across Middle East and beyond countries closing their airspace and major airlines halting operations
- Iranian-backed Houthis in Yemen have decided to resume missile and drone attacks on shipping routes

US, Israel attack Iran; Tehran strikes back, fires missiles at Gulf nations

Israeli official claims Khamenei killed in operation; Iranian Red Crescent says 201 people dead

DUBAI, AGENCIES

The US and Israel launched a major attack on Iran on Saturday, and President Donald Trump urged the Iranian public to "seize control of your destiny" by rising up against the Islamic leadership that has ruled the nation since 1979.

A senior Israeli official claimed that Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in the strikes. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had earlier said there was growing evidence that Khamenei was killed.

However, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told NBC News that Khamenei and President Masoud Pezeshkian were alive "as far as I know," and called the attack "unprovoked, illegal and absolutely illegitimate."

Some of the first strikes on Iran appeared to hit near the offices of 86-year-old Khamenei. Smoke rose from the capital as part of strikes that Iranian media said occurred nationwide.

Iranian state media, citing the Red Crescent, on Saturday evening said at least 201 people had been killed and more than 700 injured. Iran retaliated by firing missiles and drones toward Israel and US military bases in the Gulf region, and exchanges of fire continued into the night.

In a video announcing the "major combat operations," Trump told Iranians that "when we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations."

About 12 hours after the attacks began, the US military reported no US casualties and minimal damage at US bases despite "hundreds of Iranian missile and drone attacks".

It said targets in Iran included Revolutionary Guard command facilities, air defence capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and military airfields.

The targets included members of Iran's leadership, according to a US official and another person briefed on the attacks who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing operation.

Meanwhile, the UAE reported missile damage in Dubai and Abu Dhabi and one civilian death in an Iranian attack, as blasts from air defences and Tehran's missile salvo also echoed over Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Jordan and Kuwait — as well as Israel.

Across Israel, city streets stood deserted as residents took cover in shelters, while the blasts of intercepted Iranian missiles reverberated overhead.

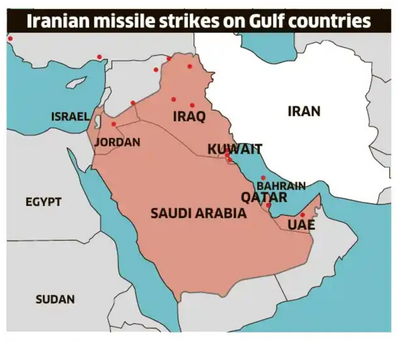
In southern Iran, at least 85 people were reported killed after a girls' school was struck, and dozens more were wounded, a local official said.

▸ Iran, Page 6

Smoke rises on the skyline after an explosion in Tehran, Iran, on Saturday. AP/PTI

STRIKES ACROSS IRAN

- US-Israel joint operation began with pre-emptive strikes in Tehran
- Israel says several senior Iranian figures were "eliminated"
- At least 85 killed in a strike on a girls' school in southern Iran
- More than 20 of Iran's 31 provinces impacted



Regions targeted by Iranian strikes
US Military bases in the Middle East

IRAN'S RESPONSE

- Iran fires salvo of missiles to Israel
- Revolutionary Guards targets US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, US bases in the Gulf
- Explosions over Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Doha, Manama, Riyadh and Kuwait City
- One civilian dies in UAE
- 4 killed by a missile of unspecified origin in Syria

"When we are finished, take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations. For many years, you have asked for America's help, but you never got it.
Donald Trump, US President

This barbaric act (on school) is another black page in the record of countless crimes committed by the aggressors.
Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran President

Our joint operation will create the conditions for the brave Iranian people to take their fate into their own hands
Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel PM

MLC stranded in Dubai

MLC S L Bhojegowda was left stranded at the Dubai International Airport after the UAE closed its airspace amid escalating tensions following the US-Israel military offensive against Iran. The JD(S) MLC, in a video message, said he was travelling from Johannesburg to India via Dubai and his onward flight was cancelled.
Details on Page 5

KIA flights face disruptions

Flight operations at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) were facing disruptions as tensions in West Asia led to widespread airspace closures. Indian airlines have proactively suspended all operations to the Gulf destinations. BIAL has said that some international flights are experiencing schedule changes.
Details on Page 4B

India calls for restraint

Hours after a massive military confrontation broke out in West Asia, India on Saturday asked Iran, Israel, and the US to "exercise restraint and avoid escalation", while embassies in Iran and other Gulf nations advised Indian residents "to avoid unnecessary movements and remain indoors" as far as possible.
Details on Page 7

Quickly

West Bengal SIR: 6.44 crore in final roll

The final electoral roll for West Bengal after Special Intensive Revision (SIR) published on Saturday further shrank to 6.44 crore voters, compared to the draft list of 7.08 crore published two months ago.
Details on Page 3

'Can't tolerate challenge to free press'

Supreme Court judge Justice B V Nagarathna has said that a challenge to the free press could not be countenanced and must be effectively tackled at the earliest. She was addressing the IPI India Award for Excellence in Journalism at the Constitution Club.

US agencies told to stop using Anthropic

The Trump administration on Friday ordered all US agencies to stop using Anthropic's AI technology and imposed other major penalties, escalating an unusually public clash between the government and the company.

Textile sector battles waste, sustainability takes a hit

Lack of circular approach to used and unsold clothes poses new problems to Indian industry as global buyers tighten waste norms

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Bharati (name changed), a resident of Ghaziabad, Delhi NCR, wanted to dispose of some old clothes. She unsuccessfully tried some apps and street vendors before finally dumping them in the garbage bin.

Like Bharati, a majority of Indians discard their used clothes which eventually end up in landfills and remain there for years. Post-consumer textile waste constitutes over 50% of around 78 lakh tonnes of textiles waste generated in India annually. Less than half of these wastes are repaired, reused or put through high-grade recycling. Textile waste is the third-largest contributor to municipal solid waste in the country, as per a recent report by Bengaluru-based think-tank Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP).

"While a significant share is reused or recycled through both formal and informal channels, it is important to strengthen organised collection systems," said Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Chairman A Sakthivel.

He noted that India generates around 8% of global textile waste. "This includes waste from manufacturing as well as discarded garments from consumers."

Textile waste is the third-largest component of municipal solid waste in India, with fast fashion-driven consumption fuelling a sharp rise in discarded garments. In pic, an apparel manufacturing unit in Bengaluru. PHOTO/AFP

INSIGHT

The issue is not just about managing domestic waste. India is a leading importer of post-consumer textile waste. Of the total textile waste generated annually in the country, domestic post-consumer accounts for 51%, pre-consumer 42%, and imported post-consumer 7%, as per 'The State of Textile Waste in India' report by Fashion for Good, a global platform for sustainable fashion innovation.

Global problem

Cutting across borders, textile waste has turned into a critical global challenge. Around 120 million metric tonnes of clothing were discarded worldwide in 2024, as per a report released by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in August last year. These discarded clothing are enough to fill more than 200 Olympic stadiums. As global apparel production steadily increases, so does the mountain of clothing sent to landfills, burned in incinerators or shipped overseas.

Each year, textile waste worth an estimated $150 billion in raw materials value is lost—resources that are extracted, processed and then quickly discarded, BCG noted in its report.

"Recovering even a quarter of these wasted resources could offset the combined annual materials expenditures of the world's 30 largest fashion companies. The environmental and economic case is clear: reducing textile waste would conserve valuable resources and minimise environmental and social impact," the report added.

In high-income countries, discarded garments that cannot be resold domestically are often exported to developing nations for resale. Those that remain unsold there too end up in open landfills in the recipient countries, creating vast and highly visible waste dumps.

A substantial amount of textile waste from the United States and Europe are exported to India. Panipat in Haryana, located nearly 90 km north of the national capital, is Asia's largest textile and recycling hub. Panipat is central to processing, where imported clothes are sorted, recycled and repurposed into new garments or blankets.

▸ Textile waste, Page 2

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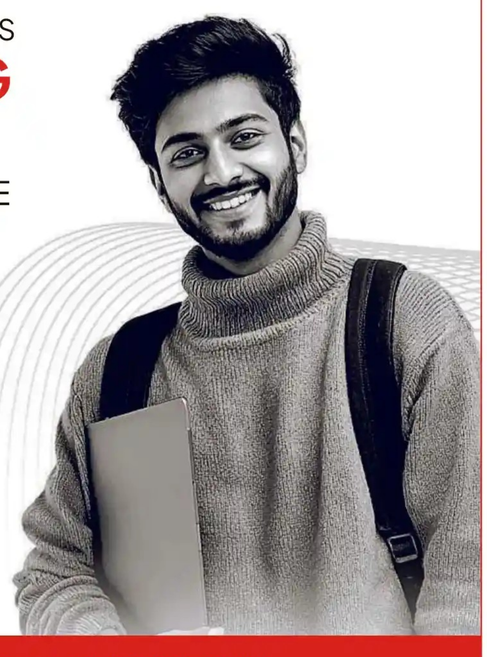

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Structured recycling system essential

Textile waste,
from Page 1

Faced with the mounting challenge of unsold textiles, the European Union (EU) has decided to ban their destruction, effective from July 2026. The European Commission announced new measures in this regard on February 9 under the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR). It seeks to prevent the destruction of unsold apparel, clothing, accessories and footwear.

Every year in Europe, an estimated 4-9% of unsold textiles are destroyed before ever being worn. This waste generates around 5.6 million tons of CO_2 emissions – almost equal to Sweden's total net emissions in 2021, as per a news article posted on the European Commission website.

The ban on destruction of unsold apparel, clothing accessories and footwear and the derogations will apply to large companies from July 19, 2026. Medium-sized companies are expected to follow suit from 2030.

"Instead of discarding stock, companies are encouraged to manage their stock more effectively, handle returns, and explore alternatives such as resale, remanufacturing, donations, or reuse," the EU Commission said.

India is among the major suppliers of clothes to Europe. The EU's ban on destruction of unsold items is likely to have a significant impact on the Indian textiles and footwear industry.

K M Subramanian, President of the Tiruppur Exporters' Association (TEA), said the EU buyers are likely to seek suppliers' cooperation in complying with the ban.

Tiruppur is India's premier knitwear export hub. The European market accounts for 30-35% of the exports from this Tamil Nadu town.

"Order quantities may be reduced, and they may ask for split deliveries. But as a cluster, we are prepared for any eventuality. There may be some initial problems, but we believe these will be addressed. We also expect buyers to handle the issue without disrupting the supply chain," Subramanian said.

Some exporters said the EU ban on the destruction of unsold clothing would encourage handling excess stock responsibly, prompting brands to reduce overproduction and demand better inventory management from suppliers. This could increase demand for recycled fibres and sustainable materials. Indian firms will need enhanced capabilities in reverse logistics and inventory management.

Recycling in Bengaluru

Despite Bengaluru producing nearly 20% of India's garments—and a corresponding volume of pre-consumer waste— neither the Karnataka government nor other civic bodies has come up with any structured system here to manage waste. Instead, the unregulated and unauthorised sector largely handles the industry's solid waste.

A study by the Centre for Research in Urban Affairs at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC), Bengaluru, estimates that the city produces nearly 5,000 tonnes of fabric waste annually, accounting for about 4% of its total solid waste. The report notes that large, export-oriented industries have structured waste management systems with formal agreements with certified waste aggregators, ensuring segregation and recycling or reuse. In contrast, smaller and tailoring units lacking formal systems often rely on informal vendors or dispose of waste through the civic body.

Girish, who runs a dyeing unit at a textile park in Bengaluru, said a common effluent treatment plant (CETP) at the park has not been functional for the past 20 years. "There are over 400 small and medium-sized dyeing and washing units inside the industrial park. Most cannot afford to set up individual effluent treatment plants (ETPs). The government had promised to improve the CETP, but it has remained non-functional for two decades," he said. The lack of treatment has resulted in groundwater contamination in surrounding areas.

The situation is not much different in Gujarat's Surat, the second-largest textile manufacturing hub in India. With nearly 400 textile dyeing and printing units, it produces around 40% of the country's synthetic fabric, in addition to cotton and silk materials. While chemical waste disposal falls under the jurisdiction of the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), the scientific disposal of textile waste, locally known as *chindi*, is still not practised by all units. According to industry sources, such waste accounts for nearly 10% of the total waste collected in Surat city.

"*Chindi is* either discarded or burned in boilers as fuel. There have been several instances of fires caused by the haphazard dumping of *chindi* in the city. The local municipal body is trying to recycle it, but much more needs to be done because the focus remains on industrial effluents dumped into the sea and rivers," said an industrialist, requesting anonymity.

Raghunath Mannil Balakrishnan, CEO, Mafatlal Industries Limited based in Gujarat, said his company has developed a structured approach to waste management that includes operational practices and external partnerships.

Key challenges

Key challenges in textile waste management include collection and sorting, recycling issues, economic barriers, and the high costs of advanced recycling technologies. Retailers are primarily responsible for destroying unsold clothing, while buyers have little involvement.

Recycling of post-consumer textile waste is challenging due to variability in colour and fibre blend. The quality of clothing produced by recycling post-consumer textiles is inferior compared to that of virgin textiles.

A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, recently claimed that it has developed a method to recycle denim waste to knitted garments without compromising quality. The team led by professors Abhijit Majumdar and B S Butola in the Textile and Fibre Engineering department of the IIT claimed that up to 50% of recycled yarns can be used in knitted clothing without deteriorating the feel of the product.

AEPC Chairman Sakthivel said the garment industry primarily manages waste through segregation and recycling of production scraps such as fabric offcuts and yarn waste. "A substantial portion of pre-consumer waste is mechanically recycled into yarn, filling material, or lower-grade textile products," he said

Many manufacturers are also improving cutting efficiency and adopting lean production techniques to minimise waste generation. However, structured systems for collecting and recycling post-consumer textile waste are still developing, he added.

Globally, several countries have implemented Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks, mandatory textile collection systems, and investing in advanced fibre-to-fibre recycling technologies.

The European Union, in particular, is moving towards structured take-back mechanisms for textiles. India has a long-standing recycling ecosystem and strong mechanical recycling capacity, but large-scale post-consumer collection systems and advanced recycling technologies are still evolving, said Sakthivel.

As per National Account Statistics, 2025, the average share of textile and apparel industry is approximately 2% of India's gross domestic product (GDP) and 11% of manufacturing gross value added (GVA) during the last three years. The sector provides direct employment to more than 4.5 crore, the second largest employer after agriculture.

Fast fashion-driven consumption has led to a surge in textile waste generation at both production and disposal levels. While India is one of the world leaders in mechanical recycling, it has not yet established a circular approach for textile waste.

The concept of circularity advocates for a regenerative system wherein textile is used as long as it retains its value and is recycled to its full potential within the textile industry, minimising leakage, waste and pollution. To date, the value chain remains largely unorganised with limited visibility, leading to leakage of waste at multiple levels. The need of the hour is to develop a robust circular system to curb this environmental challenge.

(With inputs from E T B Sivapriyan in Chennai, Pavan Kumar H in Hubballi and Satish Jha in Ahmedabad)

The looming crisis of TEXTILE WASTE

Faced with the mounting challenge of unsold textiles, the European Union has decided to ban their destruction. India is among the major suppliers of clothes to Europe and the ban is likely to have a significant impact on the Indian industry

The cost of clothing cast off

- Around 92 million tonnes of textile waste is generated globally each year, equivalent to a truckload dumped every second
- Out of the 100 billion garments produced worldwide annually, 20–30% remain unsold
- The rise of fast fashion, mass production and throwaway culture significantly contribute to textile overproduction and waste
- Unsold or discarded garments are often incinerated, exported to low-income countries or end up in landfills. Only 1% of waste is recycled to textile

Where textile waste comes from

Pre-consumer waste

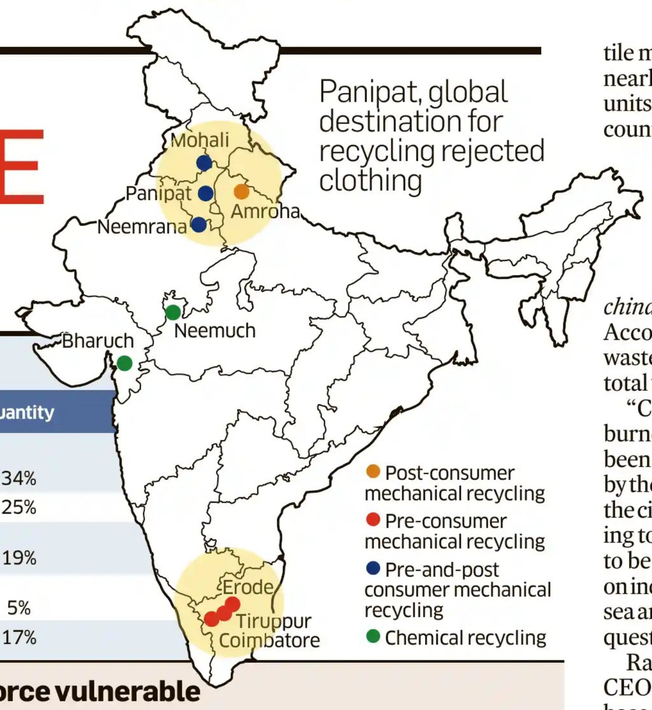
Waste generated during manufacturing process, such as fabric scraps, yarn trimmings and cutting waste

Post-consumer waste

Waste from textiles that have been used and disposed of by consumers

Imported waste

Discarded waste entering a country from other regions, including mutilated rags and second-hand clothing



17% waste ends in landfills

Waste management	Methods	Quantity
Reused	Repaired and converted into new products	34%
Recycled	Recycled into yarns	25%
Downcycled	Use in secondary industries (e.g., automobiles, wipes)	19%
Incinerated	Energy recovery in brick kilns and boilers	5%
Landfilled	Disposal	17%

Textile recycling industry workforce vulnerable

- Exposure to dust and poor ventilation
- Limited access to protective equipment
- Long working hours, modest wages
- No contracts, no social security coverage
- No legal recourse in cases of injury

11% of plastic waste comes from clothes

- Textile sector produces 2-8% of global greenhouse gas emissions
- Dyeing and finishing are responsible for 3% of global CO_2 emissions and over 20% of water pollution
- Nearly 10% of microplastics dispersed in the ocean each year come from textiles
- 11% of plastic waste globally comes from clothing and textiles
- Polyester and other synthetic materials take 20 to 200 years to break down, release toxic dyes, microplastics, and methane into the air and soil
- Landfilling 25 kilotonnes of solid waste requires 1 hectare land

40L
Number of informal workers active in India's textile recycling industry

36%
Global decline in the number of times a garment is worn, over 15 years

India generates 7,800 kilotonnes of textile waste

- Every year, nearly 7,800 kilotonnes of textile waste is generated in India, which is about 5 kg of waste per person and 8.5% of global textile waste
- The waste generated by the textile and apparel industry in India is disposed of as municipal solid waste
- It is the third-largest contributor to dry municipal solid waste, just next to plastics

Indian textile recycling market size

2025 $338 mn
2034 $429 mn

2.71%
Market growing

The recycling roadblocks in India

- Highly fragmented supply chain
- Informal sector with diverse stakeholders
- Unorganised waste management logistics
- Lack of advanced recycling technologies
- Inadequate infrastructure for collecting and sorting waste
- Lack of data and reporting

THE WAY OUT

- As per expert estimate, doubling the lifespan of clothing can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 44%
- Governments must enact policies and regulations that promote sustainability and zero-waste initiatives
- Businesses must move beyond "greenwashing" and take real steps to reduce waste, increase circularity and improve resource efficiency across supply chains
- Clothing companies must be held accountable for their products after use through efficient implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility
- Consumers must value durable products, reducing excessive consumption and embracing resale markets

Sources: Nūl, UNEP, Earth.org, CSTEP report, Business Waste statistics, Imarc, Enviu.org, Arisa report, Textilesinsight.in, media reports

Compiled by Divyashri Mudakavi DH graphics: RAMU MASTAIAH

A community-driven waste-to-wealth model in Bengaluru

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI DHNS

For Anitha (30), a waste picker-turned-entrepreneur in Bengaluru, life has changed dramatically in the last two-and-half months. Once engaged in the precarious job of picking rags marked by stigma and uncertainty, she now runs a textile recovery facility (TRF) near Nagarbhavi, employing two others and earning a dignified livelihood. At the facility, she and her team segregate and process soiled and discarded clothes, giving them a second life.

Anitha's TRF is one of three such facilities operating in Bengaluru, contributing to the city's efforts to address its mounting textile waste challenge.

The initiative to systematically handle post-consumer textile waste was first initiated in Bengaluru in 2023 through Saamuhika Shakti, a collective of not-for-profit organisations developed by the Circular Apparel Innovation Factory (CAIF), a neutral industry-led platform and an Intellecap initiative. Hasiru Dala, an NGO, is implementing this model on the ground. What started in Bengaluru has since expanded to seven other cities in India.

Under this system, a network of hyper-local TRFs collects post-consumer textile waste from households and institutions, sort them based on market needs and sell them to resellers, upcyclers, recyclers and downcyclers. Currently, TRFs are collecting waste from nearly 16 wards in Bengaluru. "Since 2023, more than 660 metric tonnes of textile waste have been diverted from landfills," says Rahul Chatterjee, Manager at Intellecap.

As per Institute for Social and Economic Change, 40% of the textile waste, being generated in Bengaluru, is now being diverted from landfills, thanks to these NGOs.

Zibi Jamal, Communications Director at Saamuhika Shakti, highlights that TRFs are not only an important avenue for managing post-consumer textile waste but also a means of income generation for former waste pickers.

Mouna B C, a member of Hasiru Dala, adds that TRFs are preventing 50 to 70 tonnes of textile waste from entering landfills daily, while also creating economic opportunities for over 140 workers.

Meenakshi Solanki, manager at Saahas Zero Waste TRF, says her centre processes about 25 tonnes of textile waste each day. She emphasises the need for TRFs to scale up in terms of the volume of waste they process and income generatation, and calls for government incentives to support the sector with a significant growth potential.

Tech takes the lead in J&K's counter-insurgency ops

Real-time drone feeds, thermal imagers help forces seal forest cordons

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

Real-time surveillance drones hovering above tree lines, thermal imagers scanning for heat signatures in pitch darkness, and night-vision devices guiding troops across steep ridges—technology is now at the heart of counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir as militancy shifts from towns and villages to dense forest belts.

Security officials say that with encounters no longer centred in urban neighbourhoods or village homes—as was common until a few years ago—the focus has moved to rugged terrain in the Jammu region, where battle-hardened, well-equipped Pakistani terrorists are operating in small, mobile groups.

"In forests, you cannot depend only on human intelligence or visual contact. Technology gives us the first set of eyes," a senior army officer said.

According to officers involved in operations across Rajouri, Poonch and Kishtwar, quadcopter drones equipped with high-resolution cameras are now deployed at the start of most search missions.

"Drones are flown ahead of ground columns to scan clearings, ridgelines and suspected hideouts. The live feed comes to a control station, and movement of troops is adjusted in real time," an officer said.

Thermal imagers and night-vision goggles have become critical in engagements that stretch into the night. "Earlier, darkness forced a tactical pause. Now, even in zero visibility, we can detect heat signatures through foliage gaps and rocky crevices," another officer said.

A CRPF vehicle patrols amid an encounter between security forces and terrorists in Kupwara district. PTI FILE

He added that militants hiding under dense canopy or inside makeshift bunkers often rely on darkness for escape—an advantage that has narrowed.

The recent joint counter-terror operation in Kishtwar's Chhatroo area, codenamed Operation Trashi-I, was cited by General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Counter-Insurgency Force Delta (CIF Delta), Major General A P S Bal, as an example of sustained, intelligence-led action.

"This operation reflects perseverance, clarity of thought, proper planning, and the vision we had from the beginning. It showcases relentless efforts over months and an integrated approach of every force and agency working here," he said.

"Our biggest achievement was not allowing them to break out of a defined geographical area," the officer said at a briefing, highlighting technology's role in sealing the cordon.

Security officials describe the current forest-based groups as different in profile from earlier local recruits, who often took shelter inside homes in villages or towns. "These are trained, battle-hardened Pakistani militants. They are well-armed and are prepared for long stays in rain, snow, and sub-zero temperatures," a police officer said. "That is why surveillance and precision tracking are crucial."

Reinforcements, including special forces, are now mobilised based on drone inputs rather than only on ground sightings. "The idea is to dominate the area from above and on the ground simultaneously," the officer said.

Officials admit that forest warfare presents constraints. A dense canopy can interfere with drone signals, and bad weather affects imagery. "Technology reduces risk but does not eliminate it. The terrain is still challenging," an officer added.

Challenge to free press must be tackled early: Justice Nagarathna

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Supreme Court judge Justice B V Nagarathna has said that a challenge to the free press could not be countenanced and must be effectively tackled at the earliest.

In her address at the IPI India Award for Excellence in Journalism 2025 at the Constitution Club here on Friday, she added that a restraint on free and frank reporting and an emergence of "selective journalism" must be curbed.

"If press freedom depends on economic viability within competitive markets, can it truly be free? ...The press may be free from the State, yet [it is] dependent on corporate power, which may in turn be dependent on State patronage," she said.

Justice B V Nagarathna

The udge highlighted that the media must again begin seriously discussing these issues because they challenge many historically held assumptions and risk disruption.

"Good journalism doesn't run on goodwill alone. When someone takes a subscription, they're really saying, this kind of reporting is worth backing," said the judge, stressing that civil society must recognise that independent reporting is a public good worth paying for.

"Some stories cannot be told from a distance. They demand on-ground reporting. Such reporting performs an essential public function. It connects law with lived reality and policy with consequence," said the judge.

She also emphasised that freedom of the press was not only a constitutional right but also an ethical practice.

Justice Nagarathna pointed out that a press outlet may be legally free to criticise the government, but economically constrained in ways that make such criticism costly or unsustainable.

"A free press is not created by decree; it evolves through interaction between readers, writers, and editors. Attempts to perfect it through centralised control, whether political or bureaucratic undermines the very spontaneity that gives it vitality. The recent trend of attempts to capture the press not only has economic underpinnings but also political overtones," she said.

60L names under 'adjudication' after West Bengal SIR

6.44 crore in final roll after deletions

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The final electoral roll for West Bengal after Special Intensive Revision (SIR) published on Saturday further shrank to 6.44 crore voters, compared to the draft list of 7.08 crore published two months ago.

The list could see an increase in the future, as a final call on 60.06 lakh voters against whom "logical discrepancies" have been found in their claims will be taken in the coming days after adjudication.

The cumulative decline is pegged at 1.21 crore, if one takes 7.66 crore voters at the beginning of SIR exercise on October 27 last year.

With the electoral rolls of 11 of 12 states and UTs that underwent SIR are out, the deletions have risen to 3,46,20,814 or 9.74% of 35,53,14,331 voters at the beginning of SIR on October 27, 2025. Now, the total number of voters in 10 states have come down to 31,86,93,690. The final electoral list of Uttar Pradesh will be out only in April.

While an SIR was held in Bihar, where electoral rolls shrunk from 7.89 crore to 7.43 crore and a special revision in Assam last year, the Election Commission has said that the SIR in the remaining 22 states and UTs, including Karnataka, is expected to start from April.

According to the EC, there were 7.66 crore voters at the beginning of the SIR in West Bengal and after the physical verification phase, during which 58.20 lakh voters did not submit their forms, this number decreased to 7.08 crore voters in the draft list published on December 16.

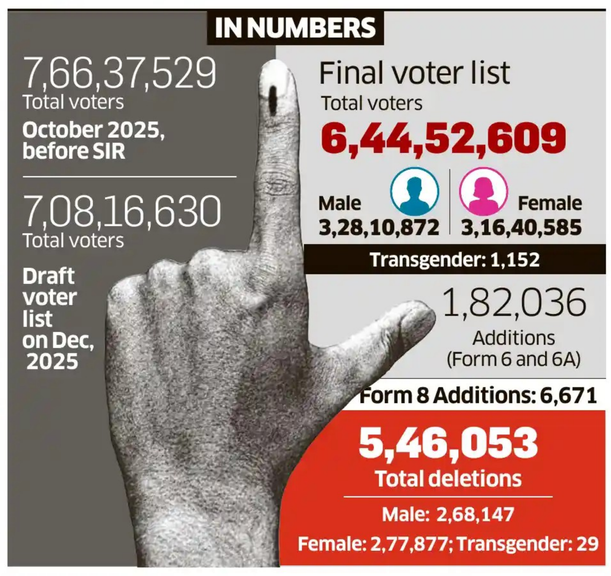
After the draft was published, 1.88 lakh voters were added to the list while another 5.46 lakh were deleted, taking the cumulative total to 7.04 crore, which included 3.60 crore men and 3.44 crore women.

Of the deletions through Form 7 after publication of draft rolls, names of women voters (2.77 lakh) saw more deletions than those of men (2.68 lakh). However, the gender ratio remained the same at 956 in both draft and final rolls.

The final rolls do not include 60.06 lakh voters, whose claims to be voters have been put on hold due to their enumeration forms showing 'logical discrepancies' like mismatch of spelling and parents' details, among others.

The West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer has handed over these 'doubtful cases' for adjudication and only approved cases can be added by way of a supplementary list later, officials said.

The data also showed that all states and UTs – Andaman and Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan – barring Goa and West Bengal, saw a rise in the number of voters in the final list.



Voters check their names after the EC published West Bengal's post-SIR electoral rolls on Saturday. PTI

Jammu & Kashmir team poses with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in Hubballi on Saturday. DH PHOTO/GOVINDRAJ JAVALI

Pitch perfect end as J&K scoop maiden Ranji title

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
HUBBALLI, DHNS

As skipper Paras Dogra declared Jammu and Kashmir's second innings closed past 2 pm on another sweltering day, elated players ran to collect the stumps as souvenirs, victorious cries rent the air, and the winning contingent melted into an embrace.

Even the bright sunshine paled in front of Jammu & Kashmir's halo of victory.

The northern-most team from India, unburdened itself from the weight of history and ended a 67-year wait for the premier national title.

Nearly seven decades after making their first Ranji Trophy appearance and in the presence of their Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah, J&K emerged champions following their victory on the basis of a first-innings lead against a heavily-fancied Karnataka at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi on Saturday.

Abdullah, who flew into the city on Friday evening after J&K all but confirmed their win, announced a cash reward of Rs 2 crore for the team.

Having taken a massive 477-run lead on the fourth day, the first-time finalists did not give Karnataka an inch on the fifth, as they continued to pile on the runs and misery on the Karnataka bowlers.

Resuming at 186/4, overnight batters Qamran Iqbal (160 not out) and Sahil Lotra (101 not out) scored their respective hundreds and stretched J&K's lead to 633 as Karnataka failed to break an unbeaten 197-run partnership off 415 deliveries.

The historic moment came at 2:11 pm when skipper Paras Dogra declared at 342/4, calling an end to the game and signalling J&K's ascendance.

Earlier, after having posted a big 584-run first innings total, J&K bowled out a star-studded Karnataka for a meagre 293 in just 93.3 overs.

Mayank Agarwal scored an impressive 160, lacing it with 21 boundaries, but failed to get any support from India internationals KL Rahul, Devdutt Padikkal and Karun Nair.

Smaran R, who was the highest run-getter of the season by just a run, also failed to trouble the scorers as Karnataka ended a roller-coaster campaign as runners-up.

20 killed as blast rips through cracker unit in Andhra

Explosion occurred around 2 pm when workers were mixing chemicals

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

At least 20 people were killed and nine others critically injured in an explosion at a fireworks manufacturing unit at Vetlapalem village in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district on Saturday.

A blast ripped through the Suryashree Fire Works unit near the Godavari Canal around 2 pm when about 50 workers were mixing chemicals.

A few of the workers had a miraculous escape as they stepped out for lunch just before the incident.

The intensity of the blast was such that it could be heard up to about five km away, and the bodies were flung 500m from the site, said sources. A private school building was also damaged in the incident.

Upon receiving the information, firefighters rushed to the scene to douse flames across six interconnected sheds.

Locals assisted in rescue efforts, while police, health, and emergency teams transported the injured to hospitals. Some workers jumped into a nearby canal to escape the fire, added the sources.

The injured were rushed to the Government General Hospital in Kakinada, where the superintendent reported seven patients with over 90% burns.

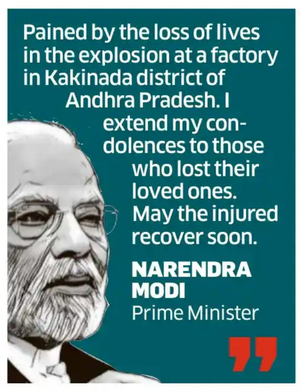
Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu visited the injured and announced an exgratia of Rs 20 lakh for the families of victims. He also announced suspension of four senior district officials.

In total, 18 people are receiving treatment and police have identified 11 of the deceased, including Adabala Srinu, Kadimpalli Krupamma, Kadimpalli Dhanaraju, Sadhanala Satyavani, Vatluri Ravi, Mandapalli Chinni, Nimmada Karuna, Gampala Manga, Godata Mahesh, Godata Ramu, and Godata Nani.

Kakinada MP Tangella Uday Srinivas noted that preliminary assessments confirmed 20 deaths, with around 15 people hospitalised—some with up to 80% injuries.

"The government has ordered an in-depth inquiry," the MP said. "If lapses by the factory owners are found, strict action will be taken," he added.

Smoke billows following an explosion at a cracker unit in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district on Saturday. PTI


Pained by the loss of lives in the explosion at a factory in Kakinada district of Andhra Pradesh. I extend my condolences to those who lost their loved ones. May the injured recover soon.
NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

Report on Baramati plane crash flags low visibility

MUMBAI, DHNS: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has cited low visibility, lack of meteorological facilities and operational gaps in the preliminary findings into the January 28 crash at Baramati airport, which claimed five lives including then Maharashtra Deputy CM Ajit Pawar.

The incident involved a Learjet 45 XR aircraft belonging to VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd that crashed while attempting to land at Baramati airport, Pune district, which is an uncontrolled airfield.

The report pointed out that the airfield did not have any navigational aids other than wind socks.

Details on Page 6

Wreckage of the plane in Baramati. PTI FILE

Pak-Afghan hostilities still on, more than 352 Taliban personnel dead

ISLAMABAD, PTI: Pakistan authorities said that about 352 Afghan Taliban personnel and their allied terrorist groups have been killed so far as the operation against them was going on, it emerged on Saturday.

Pakistan Information Minister Attaullah Tarar providing an early update about the losses of the Afghan Taliban said that so far 352 Taliban personnel have been killed and another 535 injured.

He said Pakistan forces completely destroyed 104 military posts during Operation Ghazab lil-Ha.

Details on Page 8

3 die while cleaning rainwater harvesting pit

BENGALURU, DHNS: Three people, including a house owner, died while cleaning a rainwater harvesting pit at Immadihalli in Whitefield on Saturday evening.

The deceased have been identified as Munishamappa (67), the house owner; Rudra Kumar (40), a plumber; and Vishwanath Achari (24), a delivery boy.

A senior police officer said the incident occurred around 5.30 pm at Munishamappa's residence. He had called Rudra Kumar and Achari to clear a blockage in the rainwater harvesting pit.

Details on Page 4

Rabies deaths rise even as govt prepares action plan

DH SPECIAL

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Deaths due to rabies have increased significantly in Karnataka over the last three years, with the figure jumping from 18 in 2023 to 53 in 2025.

Last year, a majority of these deaths were reported from Bengaluru Urban (18), followed by Belagavi (9), Bagalkot (5) and Vijayapura (4).

In December 2022, the state government had declared rabies as a notifiable disease.

While senior health department officials attributed the rise in death toll to increased reporting, they also acknowledged that the significant rise had pushed the department to bring out the State Action Plan for Rabies Elimination (SAPRE).

The action plan will help bring together all the stakeholders to monitor the situation, they said.

"Major measures include vaccinating dogs with anti rabies vaccine (ARV) and ensuring availability of enough vaccine and rabies immunoglobulin injections at private and government health facilities. Now, both of them are not up to the mark and hence, the rabies deaths are increasing," a senior official said.

Health officials opined that the action plan has been formulated after studying the limitations on the ground, and various departments have been brought under an obligation to ensure that they abide by their responsibilities under the SAPRE.

However, experts working with the animal husbandry department opined that for the plan to be successful, it was important to ensure funds to local bodies to vaccinate dogs effectively.

They noted that many of the urban local bodies and gram panchayats lacked funds to vaccinate dogs and this was a major hurdle.

"Vaccinating one dog costs close to Rs 265 and this has to be done annually. While the corporations in Bengaluru are doing it effectively, it is still a problem in other cities and villages owing to fund crunch," an official with the animal husbandry department said.

Meanwhile, health officials said they would hold periodic review meetings to remind other departments of their obligations.

"The health department cannot fund such initiatives. It is the responsibility of the local bodies concerned, and with the SAPRE they are obligated to take up vaccination. We will monitor them regularly," a health department official said.

Deaths owing to rabies

2023	18
2024	42
2025	53

'Daylight dacoity': HC upholds denotification order, blasts KIADB

AMBARISH B
BENGALURU, DHNS

A "daylight dacoity of lands of poor farmers by state authorities in favour of land sharks", said the high court as it upheld a denotification order involving a piece of land in Devarabesanahalli, Bengaluru South taluk, that was acquired by the KIADB for a Delhi-based company.

The court gave a dressing down to the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board in the 22-year-old case where 36 guntas of land was acquired and allotted to Royal Fragrances Private Limited to develop a software park. The only problem was that the firm was into gutka manufacturing.

"No person can be deprived of his property without due process of law, and that too the property can be acquired only for the public purpose," a division bench comprising Justices DK Singh and Justice Tara Vitasta Ganju said while allowing the appeal filed by the landowners.

The case dates back to 2004.

The landowners, Patel Jetalal Ramaji and his family members, had purchased 36 guntas of land in survey number 10/2 (23 guntas) and survey number 10/3 (13 guntas) in January 2000.

In 2004, the KIADB acquired the land to set up a software park.

But the government was in for a surprise.

▸ **HC, Page 6**

FESTIVAL OF COLOUR

People carry decorated palanquins of Lord Krishna and Radha during the 'Dola Jatra' festival, marking the beginning of the 'Holi' festival, in Bhubaneswar, on Saturday. PTI

Student dies hrs before exam

A second PU student died of cardiac arrest at her house hours before the board exams at Bambalwad village in Chikkodi taluk of Belagavi district on Saturday. Bhumika Kareppa Malinge (17) collapsed while taking bath. She died en route to the hospital.

Details on Page 6

RESILIENCE

K'taka planning panel pushes for water security

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Amid looming fears of yet another water-scare summer, the Karnataka State Policy and Planning Commission has flagged serious concerns over the depletion of groundwater across the state.

Out of the 236 taluks in the state, 45 taluks have been classified as 'overexploited' in terms of groundwater extraction. Another 15 taluks face 'critical' levels and 33 'semi-critical' levels.

Against this backdrop, the Commission has mooted climate and water mitigation measures in its latest report submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for consideration in the state Budget for 2026-2027, likely to be tabled on March 6.

Karnataka has 2,531 micro-watersheds, around 36,000 lakes, nearly 25 lakh borewells and about 19 lakh hectares of cultivable land, yet a significant area remains drought-prone, making the state among the most vulnerable after Rajasthan.

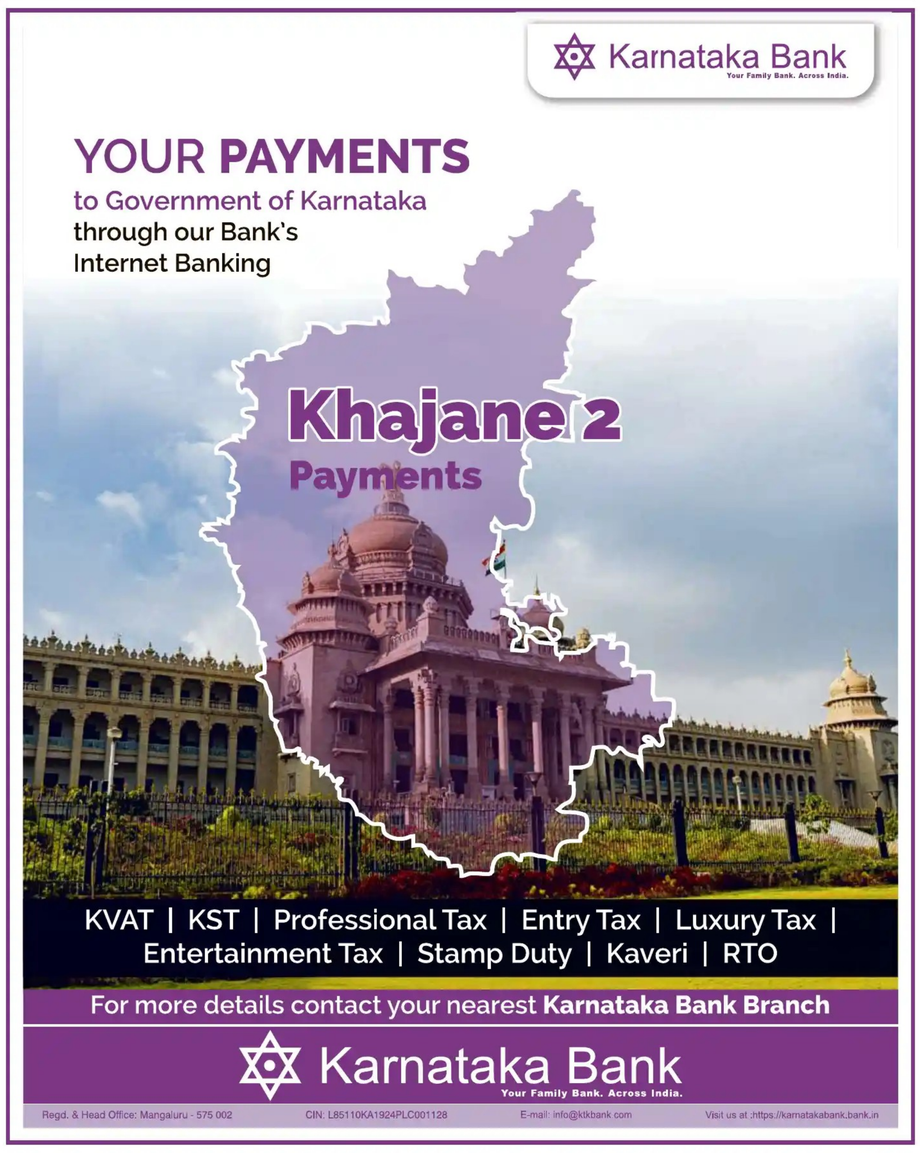
The Commission's report noted that the number of groundwater-stressed taluks has doubled over the years due to excessive extraction.

Commission Vice-Chairman B R Patil, while highlighting the scale of climate impact on agriculture and water security, said the state lost Rs 1.22 lakh crore due to floods and droughts between 2015 and 2021.

▸ **Water scarcity, Page 6**

Measures for Bengaluru

The panel has recommended installing low-cost measuring devices at borewells and water tankers to track extraction and consumption, while proposing a monitoring framework to measure crop-wise water use and improve irrigation efficiency. The report stressed real-time monitoring of surface water, groundwater and tertiary treated wastewater.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Your Family Bank. Across India.
YOUR PAYMENTS
to Government of Karnataka
through our Bank's
Internet Banking
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Payments
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3 die while cleaning rainwater harvesting pit

BENGALURU, DHNS: In a tragic incident, three persons, including a house owner, died while cleaning a rainwater harvesting pit at Immadihalli in Whitefield on Saturday evening.

The deceased have been identified as Munishamappa (67), the house owner; Rudra Kumar (40), a plumber; and Vishwanath Achari (24), a delivery boy. A senior police officer said the incident occurred around 5.30 pm at Munishamappa's residence. He had reportedly called Rudra Kumar and Achari to clear a blockage in the rainwater harvesting pit.

Munishamappa first entered the pit to clean it using certain chemicals but developed breathing problems and collapsed. Rudra Kumar, who went in to check on him, also fainted. Vishwanath Achari, who later approached the spot, also lost consciousness.

Munishamappa's wife, noticing that all three were unresponsive, screamed for help. A neighbour, Aravind, alerted the police before helping rush them to nearby hospitals, where they were declared brought dead.

Investigations revealed that the pit had not been cleaned for nearly 10 years and that none of the victims had used safety measures while carrying out the work, the police officer said.

FORM-IV
DECCAN HERALD

STATEMENT about ownership and other particulars about newspaper **"DECCAN HERALD" Bangalore** as required to be published under Section 19-D(b) of the Press and Registration of Books Act, read with Rule-8 of the Registration of Newspapers (Central) Rules, 1956

1. Place of Publication: Bangalore
2. Periodicity of Publication: Daily

3. Printer : Mr. Ravi B A, Citizen of India, No.6606, 6th Floor, Trendz Apartment, Bhogadi Gaddige Road, Mysore, Karnataka-570026.
4. Publisher : Mr. Ravi B A, Citizen ofIndia, No.6606, 6th Floor, Trendz Apartment, Bhogadi Gaddige Road, Mysore, Karnataka-570026.
5. Editor : Mr K V Subramanya, Citizen of India, #302, Maythri Grands, Apartments Road, Opposite CKA BSNL Office, 3rd Stage, Banashankari, Bangalore -560085
6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital.
Proprietors: The Printers (Mysore) Pvt. Ltd. CIN. No. U22110KA 1948PTC000521 Plot No. 7-12, Kumbalgodu Industrial Area II Phase, Mysore Road, Bangalore-560 074.
Shareholders holding more than one percent of the total capital:
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2. Mr. K. N. Tilak Kumar, No. 173, Subbaramachetty Road, Basavanagudi, Bangalore-560 004.
3. Mr. K. N. Shanth Kumar, No. 298/A, 1st Main Road, 8th Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore - 560 082.
4. K .N. Guruswamy Properties LLP,No. 75, M. G. Road, Bangalore-560001. 5. Legal Heirs of Late Khan Bahadur Budan Saheb, Landlord, Hindupur, Andhra Pradesh. 6. Mr. S. N. Srinivasa Murthy, Mr. S.N. Shiva Shankar, No. 10, VI Main, II Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-560 009. 7. Mr. S. D. Eswarasa, Sri. Durgamba Lodge, 305, Subedar Chatram Road, 6th Main, Gandhinagar, Bangalore - 560 009. 8. Mr. S.D. Aswathnarayana, Mr. S. D. Nageshwar, Mr. S. D. Shivaram, Mr. S. D. Krishnamurthy, Mr. S. N. Raghavendra, No. 361, II 'C' Cross, 4th Main Road, 3rd Stage, 3rd Block, Basaveswarnagar, Bangalore-560 079. 9. Mr. M. P. Manjunath, Apartment No.S6, Kings Dale Apartments, Dairy circle, Vihar marga, Siddhartha Layout, Mysore-570011. 10. Mr. S.D. Muniswamy, Swamy Dhondusa Fabric, Sri Lodge (Basement) No. 9, 6th Main, 2nd Cross, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-560 009. 11. Mrs. Pratibha S. Moola, Mr. Siddartha S. Moola, Ms. Lakshmi S. Moola, Ms. Vidya S. Moola, Ms. Aparna S. Moola, No. 38, Wellington Street, Richmond Town, Bangalore-560 025. 12. Mrs. Dechu R. Moola, Mr. Vishnu R. Moola, Ms. Brinda Devi Moola, Ms. Maya R. Moola, Flat No. 32, August Mansion Apts. No. 42, Curley Street, Richmond Town, Bangalore-560 025.

I, B. A. Ravi hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/-
Place : Bangalore (B.A. Ravi)
Date : 28-02-2026 Publisher

FINANCIAL WEB Authorities map sophisticated networks used to funnel illegal funds

How mule accounts power cybercrime money trails

PRAJWAL D'SOUZA
BENGALURU, DHNS

A 19-year-old engineering student's life in north Bengaluru turned into a nightmare after he learnt that the bank account and associated credentials and details shared with his friend were misused by cybercriminals to launder Rs 7 crore of crime proceeds.

This is not an isolated case.

At least after 2023, cybercrimes in Bengaluru rose sharply. The following year, cybercrime victims in the state capital lost Rs 1,995 crore, the largest sum lost to date. At the same time, cybercrime investigators trying to trace the money trail found a crucial cog in the cybercrime wheel: mule account networks.

According to sources in Karnataka's Cyber Command Centre (CCC), this is a well-oiled machine spread across the state. In many cases, cybercriminals abroad handle these networks, while in other cases, it is the local agents.

"In the case of the 19-year-old, his bank account was unwillingly used. But in some cases, people knowingly hand over their KYC details to local agents or 'mule account herders', who pay them a measly sum or a commission of 5-10% based on the transaction and open multiple accounts using those KYC details," says a senior Karnataka police officer.

Once set up, these accounts are either sold or rented online: in many cases, the sales happen through word of mouth. These accounts are also sold on online marketplaces – both on the surface web and the dark web — to cybercriminals who will buy the whole set: the bank account, the ATM cards, passbooks, cheque books, net banking credentials, linked SIM cards, etc.

This will enable the cybercriminals to have full control over the account, while investigators who dig through them will find they are actually registered in the name of some random person in some remote village or town.

Investigators say that these networks have risen in a sophisticated manner for new-age modus operandi like digital arrest and investment frauds, also known as "pig butchering" scams, leading to each of these crimes having more than five or 10 layers in the laundering process.

Layered transfers

Once the network is up and running with hundreds of mule accounts, the crime proceeds are layered by systematically funnelling them through these multiple bank accounts. They are then handled by "mule account handlers/ operators" appointed by the cybercriminals for a commission and, in some cases, as a work-from-home opportunity.

These accounts are linked to shell companies or small businesses, many of which dissolve shortly after the laundering process. The proceeds can also flow into online money-based games and task-based fraud, disguising the stolen money as genuine payouts.

In the final stage, after passing through several of these layers, the crime proceeds are converted into cryptocurrency, withdrawn as cash via ATMs or cheque, used to purchase luxury assets, etc. Majorly, the end is cryptocurrency before it is handed over to the kingpins in China and Southeast Asia, cybercrime investigations have revealed.

Systematic effort

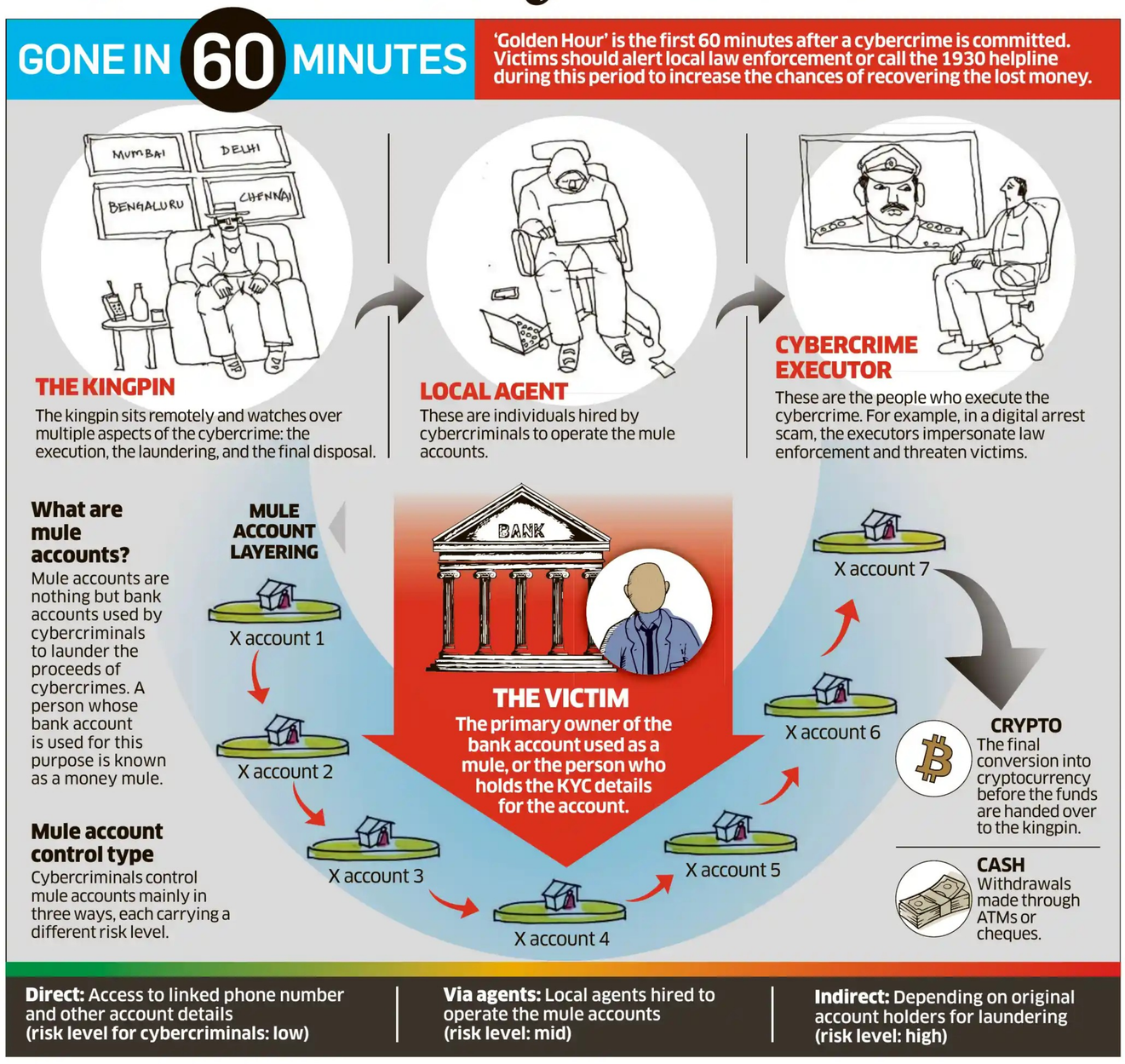
Cyber Command sources believe a concentrated effort is required to systematically dismantle these networks.

"When cybercrime cases – those damaging financially – blew up, the then approach was only recovering the money, leading to the case dying. In some cases, maybe 10%, some more investigation was done, and some local agents or foot soldiers were picked up as suspects," says a senior cybercrime investigator in Bengaluru.

"After the Cyber Command Centre was established, the approach has changed to dismantling the mule account networks. Once the network is dismantled, the cybercriminals will have no other way to park, transmit and launder the crime proceeds. If the retailer or the herder of these mule accounts is hit, it will also affect the cybercriminals in cahoots with them currently and prevent fraud in the future. This is the main aim of the recent drive to dismantle mule accounts in Karnataka by the Cyber Command Centre."

The investigators may also take a different approach towards the owners or the KYC holders of these mule accounts.

"Technically, they are complicit. But we need to look at the practicality. There can be hundred mule account owners in a single fraud, and thousands of cases are registered every year. Is it better to make them as accused, burdening the courts with prolonged trials, or make them as witnesses against the main accused? It will have to be looked at by the police investigator and those overseeing the specific cases," opined a cybercrime investigator in Bengaluru.


GONE IN 60 MINUTES
'Golden Hour' is the first 60 minutes after a cybercrime is committed. Victims should alert local law enforcement or call the 1930 helpline during this period to increase the chances of recovering the lost money.
MUMBAI
DELHI
BENGALURU
CHENNAI
THE KINGPIN
The kingpin sits remotely and watches over multiple aspects of the cybercrime: the execution, the laundering, and the final disposal.
LOCAL AGENT
These are individuals hired by cybercriminals to operate the mule accounts.
CYBERCRIME EXECUTOR
These are the people who execute the cybercrime. For example, in a digital arrest scam, the executors impersonate law enforcement and threaten victims.
What are mule accounts?
Mule accounts are nothing but bank accounts used by cybercriminals to launder the proceeds of cybercrimes. A person whose bank account is used for this purpose is known as a money mule.
MULE ACCOUNT LAYERING
X account 1
X account 2
X account 3
X account 4
X account 5
X account 6
X account 7
BANK
THE VICTIM
The primary owner of the bank account used as a mule, or the person who holds the KYC details for the account.
CRYPTO
The final conversion into cryptocurrency before the funds are handed over to the kingpin.
CASH
Withdrawals made through ATMs or cheques.
Mule account control type
Cybercriminals control mule accounts mainly in three ways, each carrying a different risk level.
Direct: Access to linked phone number and other account details (risk level for cybercriminals: low)
Via agents: Local agents hired to operate the mule accounts (risk level: mid)
Indirect: Depending on original account holders for laundering (risk level: high)

Activists flag impact of metro project on city's green cover

Construction work could affect 652 trees along 5.1 km

BENGALURU, DHNS

Environmentalists have expressed objection to the cutting down of trees for the construction of the proposed Orange Line Metro as part of Phase 3.

The Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has marked 463 trees for felling, and 189 trees will be otherwise impacted because of the project. A total of 652 trees spanning over 5.1 kilometres are expected to be affected, according to the Rapid Environmental Impact Assessment report by professors of Azim Premji University.

Environmentalists also approached the Karnataka High Court requesting realignment of the metro line. However, the High Court said it cannot order realignment but advised the BMRCL to consider the report by the professors and save the green cover.

The report also points out that the trees on that particular stretch sequestered 280 metric tonnes of carbon, which otherwise would contribute to global warming and climate change.

Prominent among the trees that will be impacted are 12 trees belonging to four Ficus species: peepul (Ficus religiosa), banyan (Ficus benghalensis), weeping fig (Ficus benjamina) and cluster fig (Ficus racemosa). Ficus trees are keystone species in landscapes, and their loss or adverse impact will, in turn, have harmful effects on the ecosystem, the study said.

Speaking to *DH*, environmentalist D T Devare said, "We are requesting realignment of the line. The blueprint is yet to be released, but once it is out it will be a hassle to get it changed, so we are trying to have it revised before the blueprint is finalised."

A meeting was held near the old banyan tree to discuss an action plan to save the trees.

Green legacy under threat

One of the most significant impacts of cutting down the trees will be the loss of a banyan tree that is about 150 to 200 years old. It has a girth of 2,700 cm and a canopy that extends across 1,242 square metres. Its size qualifies it as a heritage tree, with only a handful of trees of that size found within city limits.

City jewellers eye 18- and 14-carat gold amid price surge

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Soaring gold prices in the last six months have pushed Bengaluru jewellers to think beyond conventional jewellery. Many are now planning to manufacture gold jewellery in 18- and 14-carat purity, cutting down prices by 25% and 45%, respectively, compared to traditional jewellery made from 22-carat gold.

While a few brands already offer such jewellery, many jewellers are starting to manufacture such options only now. There is demand for such lighter jewellery from consumers as well, they say.

"We have received such demands from consumers as well. For many, gold is a sentiment and they want to buy it for occasions, so we want to make it affordable for them. We are holding a meeting with all our members to understand customer demands and see how we can move to manufacture 14-carat jewellery," said T A Sharavana, president of the Karnataka Jewellers' Association.

The plan is to step down a little so that consumers can get a higher quantity of gold within their budget.

"The traditional jewellery which is made in 22 carats can be made in 18 carats, which cuts down the price by 15%. Since the density of 18-carat gold is lower, they will get more quantity, which as a whole would result in a 25% reduction in the price for the same-design jewellery with the same or even better finishing," explained Vinod Hayagriv, Director of C Krishniah Chetty Group.

Lower-carat gold jewellery is likely to become more common in the months ahead. DH FILE PHOTO

Industry concerns

- 25% dip in jewellery business
- Price volatility confusing buyers
- Customers delay purchases when prices fluctuate

Jewellers are also planning to use 14-carat gold to prepare diamond jewellery usually made using 18-carat gold.

However, Sharavana noted that the association wants to ensure that the resale of 14-carat gold is also facilitated.

"There are some permissions we will need from the central government. Once we discuss this with the association, we will approach the Centre. It is important that we ensure all jewellers accept returns of 14-carat gold ornaments so customers have the option to resell," Sharavana said.

Fluctuating gold prices have left jewellers in the city worried, and many have reported a 25% dip in business in the last month. Customers are mostly willing to buy gold when there is a rising trend since they feel the trend could continue and they would profit. However, when prices fall, they wait, hoping they will fall further. The rise and dip cycles over the last few days have left consumers confused, and as a result, many of them have put a hold on purchasing, jewellers said.

"In fact, February was better compared to January," noted Hayagriv.

Industry experts say the situation may stabilise in a few days, and jewellery made of 18- and 14-carat gold may become common over the next few months.

ARTISTIC EXCHANGE

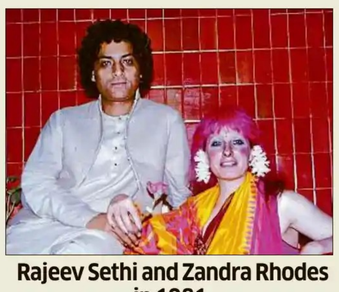
Global design veterans to discuss Indian craft traditions

RASHMI RAJAGOPAL
BENGALURU, DHNS

A talk titled 'Design, skills and transcontinental flair' will see two legendary names from the international design world — Rajeev Sethi and Zandra Rhodes — discussing Indian textile traditions and craft in the context of their work. It will be held at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur on March 2.

Sethi, a Padma Bhushan awardee, and British fashion designer Dame Zandra Rhodes share a friendship that goes back four decades. Over the years, they have collaborated on numerous projects. "As a giddy young designer working at Pierre Cardin, Paris in the early 1970s, I was in awe of Zandra and her work. She was way ahead of her time," recalls Sethi, founder of the Asian Heritage Foundation and founding member of INTACH.

Sethi, a cultural activist, designer and scenographer, began his career being mentored by the likes of renowned American designers, Charles and Ray Eames, who created the iconic Eames chairs. He also worked with noted craft revivalist Pupul Jayakar. However, he is most recognised for his exhibitions that spotlighted Indian craft and culture across the world.



Rajeev Sethi and Zandra Rhodes in 1981

85-year-old Zandra, on the other hand, is known for her whimsical, dramatic and often romantic aesthetic. Bold, unconventional and colourful prints are her trademark. She has dressed some of the biggest celebrities, from Princess Diana to Freddie Mercury.

Talking about how their unique aesthetics come together when they collaborate, Sethi says, "It is not about hierarchy, or style or prominence. It is always about the pursuit of excellence. I believe a toy picked up off the street and an object from a palace can coexist within the same exhibition to tell a story."

In July 2025, when Prada sent Maharashtrian Kohlapuri's down its Spring/Summer 2026 runway, it caused an uproar across India. Each pair was being sold for over Rs 1 lakh, with no credit to Indian artisans. While Sethi believes the credit is due, he points out that some of the backlash is myopic. "Creative people should not be so insecure" he says, commenting on the reaction of some Indian designers. However, clarifies that giving craftsmen credit is not enough. "Profit is largely due," he states.

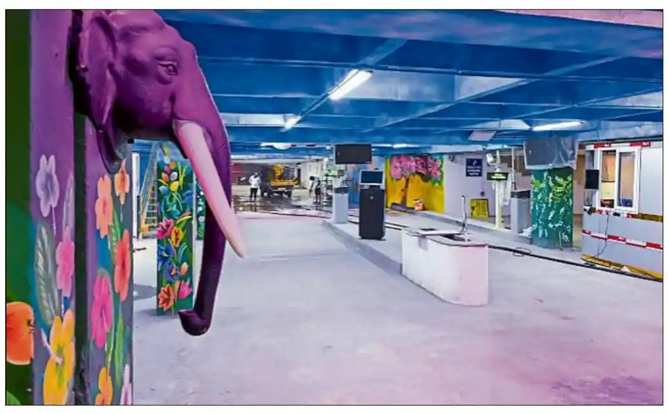
The talk will be held on March 2, 6.30 pm at Bangalore International Centre, Domlur.
For details, visit *bangaloreinternationalcentre.org*

AI cams, smart sensors to power KR Market parking facility

ASHWIN B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

After nearly three decades of neglect and accumulating over 1,800 tonnes of debris, the underground parking facility at the historic Krishna Rajendra (KR) Market is set for a high-tech resurrection. The revamped space, located in Asia's largest flower market, is being touted as a first-of-its-kind smart parking hub in the city.

The facility, which can accommodate 200 cars and 400 two-wheelers, is the result of a Rs 6.5 crore private investment under the "PPP model."



The revamped KR Market underground parking facility will open to the public shortly following final ventilation checks and finishing touches to its heritage-themed entrance. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

Smart security

The standout feature of the new facility is the 62 AI-powered cameras equipped with face-recognition software. Kumar, the owner of Right Parking Facility, told *DH* that the system can be linked directly to the police network, if necessary, to ensure safety. "If an accused person whose records are in the database enters the premises, the 90% match trigger will set off an immediate alert siren," Kumar explained. "We want to eliminate the 'market mafia' fear and ensure families feel safe visiting at any hour."

Addressing the issue of flooding in the KR Market subway area, the developers have installed a robust drainage system. The facility boasts a 1,00,000-litre total capacity across multiple sumps, supported by high-capacity 10 HP sensors and 100 HP motors. "Even if a foot of water enters, the sensors will activate the suction motors to drain it into the main line immediately. I guarantee there will be no flooding," Kumar said, noting that they cleared 167 tractor-loads (1,870 tonnes) of waste and sealed 82 illegal holes previously used to dump liquid waste into the basement.

"For years, we watched this basement turn into a dump yard and a den for illegal activities," said Ranganath, a flower merchant. "If the face-recognition cameras actually work and keep the troublemakers out, it will change the way business is done here."

"Finding a spot for a scooter in KR Market usually takes 30 minutes," said a customer.

The facility is expected to open shortly after a final inspection of the ventilation systems and the completion of a heritage-themed entrance featuring statues of Krishna Raja Wadiyar and symbolic elephants.

PRICING MODEL

DURATION	TWO-WHEELERS	FOUR-WHEELERS
0 - 1 hour	Rs 15	Rs 25
1 - 2 hours	Rs 25	Rs 45
4 - 6 hours	Rs 6	Rs 125
12 - 24 hours	Rs 175	Rs 275

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Jayanagar: Hema Chandra Kalyan Mahal, 2nd Block, (Near Ashoka Pillar) - 11
Banshankari: Sri Hari Kalyana Mantap, 30th Main, B.S.K. 3rd Stage, Near K.I.M.S. Hospital - 560085
Rajarajeshwari Nagar: Vasavi Mahal Kalyana Mantapa, Next to Reliance Digital, Ideal Homes I Phase - 560098
Vijay Nagar: Five O Gallery, 17th Cross, M.C. Road, Near Vijay Nagar Bus Stop - 560040
Rajajinagar: Raja Rajeshwari Kalyana Mantapa, 2nd Block, Next To Blue Hyunday Showroom, Dr. Rajkumar Road - 560010
Koramangala: Apoorva International, #35A, Raheja Arcade, Opp Star Box - 560095
Basavanagudi: Amolak Apparels, 7/3, 1st Floor, Opp. Karnataka Bank - 560004
Org. by: Surya Agency Pvt. Ltd.

Flood-prevention works get April deadline ahead of rains

DHNS BENGALURU,

In a race against the upcoming monsoon, Bengaluru East City Corporation Commissioner D S Ramesh on Saturday conducted a field inspection of critical stormwater drain (SWD) projects, setting an April deadline for their completion.

The Commissioner's visit comes as part of the civic body's strategy to mitigate the perennial issue of urban flooding. Inspecting key bottleneck areas, Ramesh directed officials to prioritise the Geddalahalli railway vent, where a pending payment to the Railway Department must be cleared immediately to facilitate box-pushing work by April-end.

The inspection also covered the Belagere and Siddapura rajakaluves, which are vital conduits for rainwater flowing toward Varthur and Kalkere lakes. While the retaining wall near the Belagere STP is complete, the Commissioner ordered the immediate removal of encroachments still obstructing the drain's path. "Our objective is a seamless flow of rainwater to prevent waterlogging in residential pockets," Ramesh stated. He further instructed that the Bilishivale rajakaluve, connecting to Rampura Lake, be finished before the first pre-monsoon showers.

Additional Commissioner Lokhande Snehal Sudhakar and senior engineers accompanied the Commissioner, who warned that any lapse in the stipulated timelines would be viewed seriously.

Tunnel road proposed to ease traffic at Goraguntepalya Jn

BENGALURU, DHNS: To ease traffic congestion at the Goraguntepalya junction, officials from the Bengaluru West City Corporation have proposed a short tunnel road at the junction.

According to sources, the proposal is still in the initial stages, and officials are currently conducting a feasibility study to assess the tunnel road. The corporation is said to have pitched the idea during a recent review meeting with Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar.

Senior officials said that increasing traffic congestion at the junction had forced them to look for solutions, and they are therefore exploring whether a tunnel could be a viable option. "Traffic is only growing by the day, and there is a need to explore solutions to address this. We are now conducting a feasibility study to see if a tunnel road would be a good solution both financially and practically," a senior official said.

Goraguntepalya is one of the most congested junctions in the city, and the traffic police have also flagged the need for interventions, officials said.

If the feasibility study finds the project viable, officials hope that funds for it will be earmarked in the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) budget.

However, there are several challenges before the project can take off, sources said. From studying the Metro Phase 3 alignment and the proposed double-decker flyover to land acquisition issues, a host of challenges will have to be addressed before finalising the project, officials added.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Conference on child protection: State-level judicial meet on 'Child Protection'; inaugurated by Anu Sivaraman; chaired by Sunil Datta Yadav; guest: Ravikanth; Karnataka State Legal Services Authority; Karnataka Judicial Academy; 9.30 am

Launch of Namma Karnataka Prathishtana: Priyakrishna to inaugurate; Ragam to preside; guests: B T Rudresh, Rajendra Prasad, and others; Jnanasoudha Auditorium, Kalyan Nagar, Nagarabhavi; 9.15 am

Farmer interactive session: Dialogue on 'Importance of Gokripamrutha in Agriculture' with Gopalbhai Sutariya; The Forward Foundation; Gandhi Bhavan, Kumarakrupa Road; 10 am

Book launch: Release of 'Grama Jnaana Samucchayagalu' by P Y Rajendra Kumar; guests: V Somanna and Basavaraj S Horatti; chaired by K E Radhakrishna; Gandhi Bhavan, Kumarakrupa Road; 11 am

CULTURAL

Yakshagana performance: 'Jaambavati Kalyana' by Nirmaan Yakshabalaga; featuring Balakrishna Hillodi and Rakshith Bhat (vocals), and Subraya Hillodi (lead); No 13, 2nd Main Road, Marutinagar, Ullalu Upanagara; 3 pm

Hindustani music festival: Inauguration by Hafeez Balekhan; guests: Arvind G Kulkarni and Achyuta Bidarahalli; Sri Guru Samartha Sangeetha Vidyalaya Trust; Rajendra Mantapa, JSS Auditorium, Jayanagar; 3.30 pm

Theatre performance: 'Neeru Kudisida Neereyaru' directed by Manjunath L. Badiger; Samashti; Ranga Shankara, J P Nagar; 3.30 pm and 7.30 pm

Folk art performance: Bagalkot Holi Halage Mela; Chalukya Samskrutika Sangha; KLE College Grounds, 2nd Block, Rajajinagar; 5.30 pm

◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Mainly clear sky

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	32.0°C
Minimum	20.0°C
Rainfall (as of 8:30 am)	--
Humidity (as of 5:30 pm)	NA
Sunset (Mar 1)	6:28 pm
Sunrise (Mar 2)	6:36 am
Moonrise	3:41 am
Moonset	4:00 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

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PRM/KA/RERA/1251/310/PR/150223/005721 G+14 MYSORE ROAD NEAR CHALLAGHATTA METRO STN. ₹ 67.28 - 95.28 Lakhs* 8880 461 461
PRM/KA/RERA/1251/308/PR/281125/008287 G+14 JIGANI 5 MINS. APC CIRCLE ₹ 58.45 - 92.06 Lakhs* 8880 003 003
PRM/KA/RERA/1251/310/PR/151223/006489 G+3 BANASHANKARI OPP. NPS SCHOOL (3 & 4-BHK) ₹ 1.45 - 2.17 Cr* 8880 461 461
PRM/KA/RERA/1250/301/PR/251024/007178 G+14 YELAHANKA 5 MINS. RAJANUKUNTE ₹ 54.85 - 97.21 Lakhs* 8880 465 465
PRM/KA/RERA/1251/308/PR/160824/006973 G+14 BANNERGHATTA RD. NEAR KOPPA GATE ₹ 62.42 - 85.23 Lakhs* 8880 013 310
PRM/KA/RERA/1251/308/PR/230126/008427 G+4 SARJAPURA SARJAPUR - ATTIBELE ROAD ₹ 63.60 - 83.25 Lakhs* 8880 003 003
PRM/KA/RERA/1251/308/PR/160824/006972 G+4 HOSA ROAD METRO NEAR ELECTRONIC CITY ₹ 67.92 L - 1.34 Cr* 8880 013 310
PRM/KA/RERA/1250/304/PR/150224/006622 G+14 WHITEFIELD SOUKYA ROAD ₹ 70.65 L - 1.06 Cr* 8880 461 461
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2. **Qualification :** Graduate / Post Graduate. Preference – B.Ed./ NTT Knowledge of Computer and Effective Communication Skills in English and Hindi is Must.
3. Resume, Educational Documents, ID Proof Along with Contact Details Be Submitted By 03 **March 2026 At School To NCO Directly.**
4. Interview Will Be Scheduled **On 14th March 2026 at Domlur Pre Primary School,** Govt. Married Accommodation, Near Suzuki Showroom.

Contact Details : 7391967356 (Prakash Malewar), 8279223298 (Rotash Kumar Jangir)

KARNATAKA REDDYJANA SANGHA
No.1, Mahayogi Vemana Road, 3rd Block, Koramangala, Bangalore-34.

TENDER NOTICE

Quotations are invited from experienced contractors for **Internal Electrical and Civil works for Medical College, Boys Hostel and supply of light fixtures and fixing works for 24x7 Hospital building at Kasavanahall**i of KRJS Group of Institutions.

Sealed quotations are to be submit within 07 days of this publication.

For more details, Visit our website **www.reddyjanasangha.org** or Contact: **080-25534194** or **9036130173, 9035244612**

Sd/- **President** Sd/- **General Secretary**

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लघु वितरणी प्रमंडल संख्या–12
संयुक्त कार्यालय भवन
डिमना रोड मानगो, जमशेदपुर–831012
(Email:-eemdd12mangojamshedpur@gmail.com/ Ph.No. 0657-2954509)

ई0–प्रोक्युरमेंट सूचना

ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या–डब्लूआर0डी0 / एम0डी0डी0–12 / जमशेदपुर / SBD–01 / 2025–26 दिनांक: 27.02.2026

1	कार्य का नाम	Strengthining of Lining work, embankment and jungle clearance of chandil Left main Canal from Km. 59.72 to Km. 78.567
2	प्राक्कलित राशि	रु0 11,74,84,244.87(रु० ग्यारह करोड़ चौहत्तर लाख चौरासी हजार दो सौ चौवालीस एवं पैसे सतासी) मात्र।
3	अग्रधन की राशि	रु0 11,75000 (रु० ग्यारह लाख पचहत्तर हजार) मात्र। (To be Deposited as per sop issued vide letter no. 120 dt. 03-10-2023 of information and technology e-governance Department Jharkhand.)
4	कार्य पूर्ण करने का समय	360 Days
5	वेव–साईट पर निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना के प्रकाशन की तिथि	06.03.2026 (शाम 5:00 बजे)
6	निविदा अभिलेख डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि	27.03.2026 (शाम 5:00 बजे तक)
7	निविदा प्राप्त करने की तिथि तथा समय	27.03.2026 (शाम 5:00 बजे तक)
8	निविदा खोलने तिथि	30.03.2026 (पूर्वाहन् 11:00 बजे)
9	विज्ञापन दाता का नाम एवं पदनाम	कार्यपालक अभियंता, लघु वितरणी प्रमंडल संख्या–12, मानगो, जमशेदपुर।
10	प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट पदाधिकारी का सम्पर्क संख्या	9693542486
11	ई प्रोक्युरमेंट पदाधिकारी का हेल्प लाईन संख्या	0657–2371765

नोट:– प्राक्कलित राशि घट–बढ़ सकती है। केवल ई–निविदा स्वीकार्य। अधिक जानकारी के लिये वेव साईट–http://jharkhandtender.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता
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मानगो, जमशेदपुर।

PR 373851 (Water Resource) 25-26 (D)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT ROAD DIVISION, DUMKA

E-Procurement Notice
Tender Reference No.- RCD/DUMKA/325
Date 28.02.2026

1	Name of Work-	IRQP/Strengthening Work of Raghunathpur to Barmasia Road (Total Length-26.525 Km) under Road Division Dumka for the year 2025-26.
2	Estimated cost(In Rs)	Rs 24,78,02,700.00
3	Time of completion	Six Months
4	Date of Publication of Tender on Website	13.03.2026 at 10.30 AM
5	Last date/Time for receipt of bids	08.04.2026 Up to 12.00 Noon
6	Date of opening of Tender	09.04.2026 at 12.30 PM
7	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Office of The Executive Engineer Road Construction Department Road Division, Dumka.
8	Contact no. of Procurement Officer	8252424164
9	Helpline number of e-Procurement cell	0651-2401010

Further details can be seen on website http://jharkhandtenders.**gov.in**

Executive Engineer,
Road Construction Department,
Road Division, Dumka

PR 373813 (Road)25-26*D

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, HAZARIBAG.

e-Procurement Tender Notice
Two Envelope System
Tender Reference No. :- DMFT/MID /HAZARIBAG/F2-37/2025-26
Letter no - 152 Date :- 28.02.2026

1.	Name of the work	Construction of Lift Irrigation from Salaiya river for Irrigation, Block- Barkatha, District- Hazaribag
2.	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	**Rs.- 1,09,29,750.00**
3.	Time of Completion	11 Months
4.	Date of Publication of e-Tender on website	16.03.2026 at 1:00 P.M **(e-Procurement Portal- http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in)**
5.	Last date/Time for Submission of e-Tender bids Online	25.03.2026 up to 5:00 P.M
6.	Last Date for Online Submission of Tender Fee and EMD	25.03.2026 up to 5:00 P.M
7.	Date of opening of e-Tender	27.03.2026 at 03:00 P.M
8.	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Hazaribag
9.	Contact no. of e-Procurement officer	06546-270485
10.	E-mail of e- Procurement officer	eemidhbg-cemr-jhr@nic.in

Note:- 1.) Only e-Tender will be accepted.
2.) Published Estimated Cost may be increased or decreased.
3.) Further details can be seen and Mode of Submission of Online Tender/Tender Fee/EMD through http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer,
Minor Irrigation Division,
Hazaribag.

PR 373867 (Minor Irrigation)25-26*D

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY

OPEN TENDER NOTICE No. 03/SBC/26 of 19.02.2026

The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.	Description of work	Approx Value
1	**Bengaluru - Sampige Road Section:** Proposed extension of existing Foot Over Bridge (FOB) at Nidavanda (NDV) from PF No. 1 to circulating area with stairs and provision of 1 lift at Nidavanda (NDV) station. (Size: Gangway = 1x15x3.3m = 49.50 M Sqm. Size: Stairway = 1x15.70x3.3m = 51.81 Sqm). Maintenance period is 12 months.	Rs. 1,34,15,525/-
2	**Sr. Divisional Engineer/North/Bengaluru (SBC) Section: Yesvantpur:** Supply of potable water to Yesvantpur station for a period of two years.	Rs. 2,06,74,290/-
3	**Sri Sathya Sai Prashanthi Nilayam Section:** Pway maintenance contract for two years 2025-2027 in SSE/PWay/Sri Sathya Sai Prashanthi Nilayam (SSPN) Section, under Sr. Divisional Engineer / North /Bengaluru (SBC) jurisdiction.	Rs. 2,46,14,928/-
4	**Bengaluru - Salem Section:** Construction of RUB near waterway Br. No. 306 at trespassing location at km. 126/000-100 RCC box in Asst. Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri sub-division. Maintenance period is 6 months or one monsoon period whichever is later.	Rs. 2,28,80,864/-
5	**Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru (SBC) Section:** Construction of RCC drain (3000m) and ballast retaining wall (1000m), in connection with the work of Bengaluru - Salem (SBC-SA) Section: Complete track renewal(P) of existing 52Kg rails on 52Kg PSC of 1540 Nos/KM with 60kg/90UTS rail and 60Kg wider base sleeper of 1660/Km for a length of 22.0 Km. from Km. 23/000-45/000(SL) in Asst. Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri Jn. (DPJ) section. Maintenance period is 6 months.	Rs. 4,33,24,576/-
6	**Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru (SBC) Section:** Construction of RCC drain 4100m and ballast retaining wall 1000m, in connection with the work of Bengaluru - Salem (SBC-SA) Section: Complete track renewal (P) of existing 52 Kg. rails on 52 Kg. PSC of 1540 Mos / Km with 60 kg/90UTS rails and 60kg wider base sleeper of 1660/Km for a length of 20.2 Km from Km. 45/000-54/000, 55/100-900 & 56/100-66/500(SL) in Asst. Divisional Engineer/Dharmapuri Jn. (DPJ) Section. Maintenance period is 6 months.	Rs. 5,81,58,950/-
7	**Divisional Engineer/South/Bengaluru (SBC) Section:** Proposed extension of Br. No. 25 (existing span 1x11.18 PSC slab) at km 14/300-400 near Nelamangala (NMGA) yard as 1x12.20m PSC slab for accommodating proposed track machine siding track in Asst. Divisional Engineer/Kunigal section. Maintenance period is 6 months or one monsoon period whichever is later.	Rs. 1,62,99,775.63
8	**Chikka Banavara - Hassan section: Sub Work-I:** Proposed extension of Bridge No. 117 near Sharavanabelagola (SBGA) in connection with proposed track machine siding in Asst. Divisional Engineer/Kunigal section. **Sub Work-II:** Proposed extension of Bridge No. 118 near Sharavanabelagola (SBGA) in connection with proposed track machine siding, under Asst. Divisional Engineer/Kunigal jurisdiction. Maintenance period is 6 months or one monsoon period whichever is later.	Rs. 3,07,03,456/-
9	**Divisional Engineer/South/Benglauru (SBC) section:** Proposed Foot Over Bridge (FOB) at Sivadi (SZV) station of Salem-Bangalore section. Maintenance period is 12 months.	Rs. 2,43,23,005/-
10	**Sub Work-I: Bengaluru - Sampige Road Section:** Proposed provision of Station Master's Rest room at Golhalli (GHL), Nidvanda (NDV) and Dodbele (DBL) stations. **Sub Work-II: Asst. Divisional Engineer/Hindupur Sub Division:** Civil works in connection with provision of lifts on PF-1 & PF-2&3 (2 Numbers) at Gauribidanur (GBD) stations. **Sub Work-III: Asst. Divisional Engineer/Yeshwantpur Sub Division:** Proposed construction of RCC retaining wall and provision of borewell at Yelahanka/TSS. Maintenance period is 12 months.	Rs. 1,06,32,673/-

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 16.03.2026**

For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in

Senior Divisional Engineer/Co-Ordination/ Bengaluru

PUB/939/AAMO/PRB/SWR/2025-26

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South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

Woman dies by suicide after astrologer predicts lover's short lifespan

BENGALURU, DHNS: Distressed over an astrologer's prediction about her lover's "short lifespan", a 27-year-old woman allegedly died by suicide at her house in Bagalagunte on Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Vidya Jyothi, a resident of MEI Layout. She had completed an MBA a few years ago and was working in a private company on Hosur Road.

A senior police officer said that Jyothi was in love with a youth who hails from Kodagu, and her family initially opposed the relationship as he belonged to a different caste.

As she was deeply attached to her lover, she decided to marry him. To proceed further, her family decided to match their horoscopes and recently met an astrologer, who predicted that her life partner had a "short lifespan" and advised Jyothi to perform special rituals for nine days.

As per the astrologer's advice, she had completed eight days, and on Friday the family was supposed to offer a 'thali' along with a silk saree to the Goddess to conclude the rituals.

After lunch, Jyothi went to her room and locked herself inside. As she did not come out for a long time, her father, Umesh, went to call her to visit the astrologer and repeatedly knocked on the door. When there was no response, the family broke open the door and found her hanging. No death note has been found, and the police suspect that she may have taken this extreme step upset over the astrologer's prediction about her future, police said.

CM promises to fulfil demands of teachers in phased manner

Teachers can't be exempted from poll duty, says DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has promised promotions to graduate teachers and implementation of the Old Pension Scheme. "The issue will be placed before Cabinet for further discussion," he said.

He was speaking at a state-level education convention organised alongside the golden jubilee celebrations of the Karnataka State Government Primary School Teachers' Association in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Siddaramaiah said that the demands of the teachers will be met in a phased manner. "Years ago, when I was Finance minister, I appointed one lakh teachers. I implemented the recommendations of a pay commission too. An honest effort will be made to fulfil teachers' demands," he said.

Exhorting teachers to conduct themselves admirably, Siddaramaiah added, "A safe and secure society can be built by imparting rational education and instilling scientific temper in children. Prepare children who can shape the future. Teachers must discharge their constitutional duty. Children must be taught to question and to reason."

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, meanwhile, assured the teachers of allotting a site for the construction of the building to house the Karnataka State Government Primary Teachers' Association.

"Teachers cannot be exempted from election duty. They work lawfully. With elections to the local bodies coming up, I request you all to work. We are with you. Your blessings are a must for our government," said Shivakumar.

The government will utilise funds to the tune of Rs 8,000 to Rs 10,000 crore disbursed by private companies under the CSR initiative to upgrade infrastructure of rural government schools. He called upon private schools to adopt government institutions and appoint teachers. "This will help fill 90,000 vacant teaching posts. We will implement this in the coming days," Shivakumar added.

Minister for School Education and Literacy Madhu Bangarappa said that he was satisfied with the work he had done as a minister. "We expect the results to be 15% higher this year compared to the previous year. We have also increased the target for enrolment in government schools by 20%, and teachers must work hard to meet this target," he added.

Delivering a talk at the convention, writer and thinker Baraguru Ramachandrappa said that there should be no "murder" of government schools, nor must they be pushed to "suicide."

Pointing to apprehensions among stakeholders that establishment of Karnataka Public Schools could potentially lead to the closure of other government schools, he added, "The Minister for School Education has said that not even a single school will be closed. Let us trust him. But others are saying some schools may be closed. Which of these is true? There must be an open discussion for the truth to emerge."

Academicians urge govt to publish SEP for public debate

BENGALURU, DHNS: A group of academicians and activists, who took part in a symposium on 'Status of School Education in Karnataka' jointly organised by the Kannada Development Authority (KDA) and the Research Institute for Policy Formulation on Saturday, urged the government to adopt the State Education Policy (SEP) and publish it in the public domain for public debate.

"The SEP report should be tabled in both the Houses (of the state legislature) and approved unopposed," they demanded. "The State Education Policy Commission submitted the SEP report to the government on August 8, 2025. The policy, in line with the aspirations of democracy and the Constitution, was expected to be released in the public domain. This is because students, teachers, parents, educationists, and all citizens of the state have the right to know the intentions, proposals and recommendations of the policy," they stated.

Among those present at the symposium were Prof Purushottam Bilimale, Chairman of the KDA; Prof. Rajendra Chenni, a member of the SEP Commission and educationist Niranjanaradhya V P, who was also part of the Commission.

Gaming, AI in focus on Day 2 at GAFX Summit

BENGALURU, DHNS

The second day of the GAFX Summit 2026 featured discussions on developing gaming platforms, evolving modes of storytelling and emerging trends in the gaming industry.

The day began with a session by Rohan Mayya, co-founder of Aeos Games, which is set to launch Unleash the Avatar (Project 11A), a high-fidelity soulslike action role-playing game slated for a 2026 PC release.

The action RPG draws from Indian mythology and is set in a historical backdrop, featuring unique weapons, such as the chakra and a mythical sword.

The game's photorealistic design is inspired by titles, such as Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice and Black Myth: Wukong.

"We have several cultural references, including a Rajput king-based enemy and a Kathak-based enemy. The usage of weapons shapes the gameplay," Mayya said.

The visual design of the game recreates Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh, with the town digitally scanned and rendered on screen.

Visitors at the 7th edition of Bengaluru GAFX organised by the Department of Electronics, Information Technology, and Biotechnology, in Bengaluru on Saturday.
DH PHOTO/B K JANARDHAN

An app called Pixel Perch, developed by Wacom and the ABAI, was also launched at the summit. The app aims to help beginners understand the fundamentals of game development and associated skills.

'Readership is not down in India'

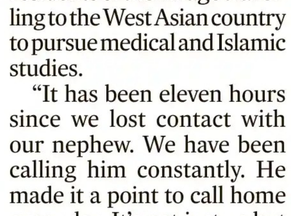
Addressing claims that readership is declining in India, Ranjeet Singh, founder of Pratilipi, said, "Readership is not down; that is a lazy assumption. The meaning of reading has changed. What literature or a book means has changed, but the habit remains."

"People's need to escape from the harsh realities of life will always exist, and so will stories. The medium and format may change, but the habit will remain," he said.

On the role of artificial intelligence in writing, Singh observed, "AI can be a tool, but not a creator. If one is a writer, it can make one's writing better, and that is its limit."

Middle East crisis: Disruptions in flight ops from Bengaluru airport

Check latest flight status before leaving for airport: BIAL to fliers



BENGALURU, DHNS

Flight operations at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru are facing disruptions as escalating tensions in the Middle East led to widespread airspace closures across the region on Saturday.

The disruption follows coordinated strikes by the United States and Israel targeting locations in Iran.

In response, several nations, including Iran, Iraq and the UAE, have temporarily shut their airspaces to civilian traffic, forcing global carriers to cancel, divert or ground several flights.

Indian airlines, including Air India and IndiGo, have proactively suspended all operations to Middle Eastern destinations.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued an urgent safety advisory for Indian carriers to avoid the airspace of several countries in the region.

In an advisory to passengers, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the operator of KIA, has said some international flights are experiencing schedule changes.

Passengers have been advised to check the latest flight status with their respective airlines before proceeding to the airport.

Help desk

To support passengers, a dedicated help desk has been set up at the kerb side (level 3) of Terminal 2 to assist travellers with information and guidance.

"We are closely monitoring the situation in coordination with airlines and relevant authorities to ensure smooth passenger movement and minimise inconvenience," BIAL said in the advisory.

CB'Pur village on edge

The joint strike by US and Israel on Iran has set many residents in Allipur village of Chikkaballapur on edge, given that members of nearly a hundred Shia Muslim families of Allipur are currently stranded in Tehran, Qom, Mashhad and other cities of Iran.

Allipur's ties with Iran date back several decades, with residents of the village travelling to the West Asian country to pursue medical and Islamic studies.

"It has been eleven hours since we lost contact with our nephew. We have been calling him constantly. He made it a point to call home every day. It's not just us but scores of families in our village are anxiously waiting for information about their loved ones stranded in Iran," said Syed Mehdi, a resident of Allipur in Gauribidanur taluk, Chikkaballapur district.

Fire breaks out at bakery in T Dasarahalli

BENGALURU, DHNS: Tension prevailed in T Dasarahalli after an accidental fire broke out at Cake Palace bakery on Saturday evening, gutting goods worth a few lakhs.

According to the Bagalagunte police, the incident occurred around 4.15 pm near Peenya 8th Mile in T Dasarahalli. Fire personnel rushed to the spot with a fire tender and brought the blaze under control after nearly two-and-a-half hours. Police suspect an electrical short circuit to be the cause of the fire and have taken up further investigation.

Krishna, the bakery owner, claimed that materials worth around Rs 10 lakh were destroyed in the mishap, and residents in the locality panicked following the incident.

PM SHRI KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA No.2 BELAGAVI CANTT.

WALK-IN INETRVIEWS FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTUAL STAFF (2026-27) ON 9th & 10th MARCH 2026

Walk-in Interviews will be conducted on 9th & 10th March 2026 to prepare Panel of Contractual / Part Time teachers (as per KVS norms) for the academic year 2026-27.

PGTs-Physics,Chemistry,Maths,Biology,Commerce,Economics, Hindi,English,Computer Science,Geography,History,Pol.Science

TGTs-Science,Maths,Social Science,English,Hindi,Sanskrit

Primary Teachers,Balvatika Teachers,AI Instructors,Special Educator Educational Counselor,Sports Coach(Male & Female),Yoga Instr Dance & Music Instructor, Art Instructor Kannada Language Instructor (CTET or TET qualified) Doctor, Nurse, Self Defence Trainer, Vocational Instr, Band Instr.

For complete details visit following website:
https://no2belagavicantt.kvs.ac.in/en/ - Principal

S.NIJALINGAPPA SUGAR INSTITUTE, BELAGAVI
C.T.S.No.4125/1B, Ganeshpur Road, Laxmi Tek, Belagavi-590 009 (Karnataka)
(O) : 0831- 2472482, Fax : 0831-2472464. Email: snsibgm@yahoo.com

RE-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sub: **Tender no. SNSI/2025-26/IND0004/Call-3 for Supply, installation, commissioning of Various equipments & Tender no. SNSI/2025-26/IND0005 for Supply, installation, commissioning of Software at S. Nijalingappa Sugar Institute, Belagavi is floated**

1. The Contractors are invited for Supply, installation, commissioning of Various equipments viz., Automatic Digital Polarimeter and Spectophotometer at S.Nijalingappa Sugar Institute, Belagavi
2. The details for equipments required at S.Nijalingappa Sugar Institute, Belagavi can be viewed in SNSI/2025-26/IND0004/Call-3 & details for software required can be viewed in SNSI/2025-26/IND0005 from e-procurement portal **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**
3. The last date for receipt of the tender documents in the e-procurement portal is on **10.03.2026** upto **17.30 hrs.**

Date:26.02.2026 Sd/- Director

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, CHITRADURGA

No.EE:PWD:CTA:AE-1:Tender-64:2025-26 Dated:- 27.02.2026

SHOR TERM E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited from registered Contractors in KPWD for the following works through KPPP Portal as per standard tender documents rules.

Name of work:- Two cover System:- Head of Account 4059-80-051-0-60-132 CMIDP Works:- (1) Improvements and Asphalting to road from SH-24 to Bharampura road via Tavandi, road Fom ch 10.00 to 11.40 km and 14.00 to 15.20 km in Hiriyur Taluk (Sooragondanahalli, Hulitotlu, C.N.Malige, Adiralu, Bharampura) (W.I.31813)/CALL-2

Estimate Cost Rs. in Lakhs:- 200.00

(2) Improvements to NH-4 Gowrammanahalli to Hulluru road from Ch 7.00 to 8.50 Km (Working ch 7.00 to 9.24) in Chitradurga Taluk (W.I.31703) /CALL-2 **Estimate Cost Rs. in Lakhs:- 200.00**

Tenders dates are as mentioned below: Late Date & time for Tender Queries/ Clarifications 05-03-2026 Time: 17.30
Last Date & time for receipt of tenders 06-03-2026 Time: 16.00
Date & time for opening of Technical Bid 07-03-2026 Time: 16.15
Date & time for opening of Financial Bid 09-03-2026 Time: 11.00
Further details can be obtained from this office and H.P. Company helpline Numbers 91 9240214000 and 91 9240214001.

DIPR/CTA/KSMCA/ 716/2025-26 **Sd/- Executive Engineer PWD, Chitradurga.**

Day One of II PU exams records 96.87% attendance

BENGALURU, DHNS: As many as 96.87% of the total registered students appeared for the second PUC examination across the state on the first day, Saturday.

The examinations for Kannada and Arabic were conducted smoothly at 1,217 centres. No cases of malpractices were reported.

A total of 5,09,085 students had enrolled for the language papers. Of them, 4,93,132 students appeared, while 15,953 remained absent.

To prevent malpractices, the Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) webstreamed the examination process from all centres.

Tight police security was maintained at every centre, and prohibitory orders were imposed in the vicinity of examination venues.

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), and other public transport corporations provided free bus services to the students.

'SIR stripping women of their constitutional right to vote'

Meeting resolves to hold statewide protests to oppose EC drive

BENGALURU, DHNS

At a consultation meeting held with women's organisations under the aegis of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the activists opined that the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is designed in a manner that deprives women of their voting rights.

Hundreds of representatives from around 32 women's organizations from across the state participated in the meeting that was held to discuss the impact of SIR of electoral rolls on women.

"While the Special Intensive Revision was being conducted by the Election Commission of India, lakhs of women voters across nine states face the risk of losing their voting rights. There is no doubt that the manner in which this process has been designed effectively excludes women from voting," a statement by AITUC said.

Many of them also opined that in Karnataka, even prior to the implementation of SIR, the voter list mapping process was conducted hastily and without transparency.

"As a result, the names of lakhs of women, migrant and other wage workers, domestic workers, Dalits, nomadic and other marginalized communities, and slum dwellers are being left out of the electoral rolls. Young people who have entered into love marriages and live away from their parental homes are also at risk of exclusion. The Election Commission of India has not clarified how such voters will be re-included in the rolls once SIR is implemented," the statement said.

Maitreyi Krishnan from the All India Lawyers Association (AILAJ) opined that the SIR was unconstitutional and was depriving women of their constitutional right to vote. "Earlier, revision of electoral rolls was the responsibility of the government, with officials conducting door-to-door verification. Now, through SIR, this burden has been shifted onto citizens. The Election Commission has prescribed 11 documents, which are not easy for women to produce; therefore, this measure effectively deprives women of their constitutional right to vote," she said.

The following resolutions were adopted during the meeting: all women's and LGBTQI rights organizations shall vociferously oppose the SIR, statewide protests will be undertaken throughout March 2026 to oppose the SIR, and this year's Women's Day shall be observed by discussing the SIR and the manner in which it strips women of the rights they have fought hard to acquire.

Accused shot at while resisting arrest in murder case

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Sampigehalli police have solved the recent murder of rowdy-sheeter Pavan Kumar and shot an accused in the leg during the arrest.

The injured accused has been identified as Horamavu Ranjith (30).

Police said that Ranjith is facing an attempt-to-murder and robbery case at Banaswadi police station. His gang members J Prem, Pratap, Karthik, Velu, Arun and Praveen have also been arrested, while Lohith and Kulla Ranjith are absconding.

A senior police officer said that a team led by an inspector traced him to an isolated area in Bagalur early on Saturday morning. When they went to nab Ranjith, he allegedly tried to escape and attacked police inspector Venkatesh and constable Hanumanthu with a sharp weapon, injuring their hands. Venkatesh first fired a warning shot in the air from his service revolver and asked the accused to surrender. As Ranjith allegedly attempted to attack again, the officer shot him in the leg in self-defence. He was later secured and shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the murder was carried out in retaliation for the 2023 killing of notorious rowdy-sheeter J Kapil, and his brother Prem was allegedly seeking revenge against Pavan Kumar, who was hacked to death on Wednesday night. Pavan Kumar, who was running a bakery, had returned home in Thanisandra and was about to park his two-wheeler when Prem and his associates allegedly attacked him with lethal weapons in front of his mother and fled the scene.

4, including two students, drown in tanks in separate incidents

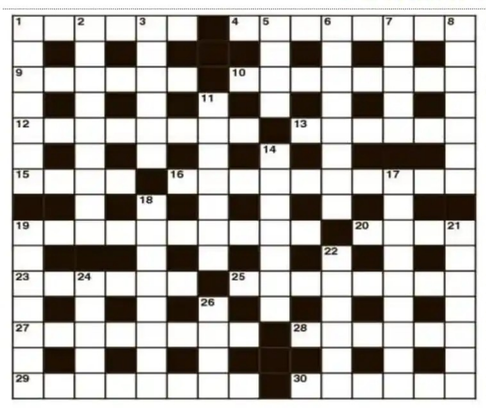
MULGUND (GADAG DISTRICT), DHNS: Two students returning to hostel from school ventured to swim in a tank and met watery grave in Mulgund on Saturday.

The deceased are: Basavaraj H Badagera and Parashurama M Vaddara, both aged 15 years and Class 9 students.

After the school, six students went to tank on Kallur road in the town. Two of them jumped into the lake and drowned in shallow waters.

In another incident, two women drowned in a tank in Gandabommanahalli of Kudligi taluk in Vijayanagara district. They were identified as Sarojamma (45) and Sujatha (28) of Gudekote.

◆ SUNDAY CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 2669 ◆



ACROSS
1 Italian Mediterranean island (6)
4 Type of word puzzle (8)
9 To exhibit (3,3)
10 Frank and confidential (3,2,3)
12 Supporter of a cause (8)
13 A good quality (6)
15 Secluded place (4)
16 Coiled brass wind instrument (6,4)
19 Kindly but authoritative figure (5,5)
20 Measure taken (4)
23 Comprehend (6)
25 Out (2,6)
27 Flummox (8)
28 Submissive (6)
29 Scholarly article (8)
30 Bear witness to (6)

DOWN
1 Encourage (7)
2 Tough and ruthless (3-6)
3 Paris museum and art gallery (6)
5 Persuade by flattery (4)
6 Undisputed (8)
7 To risk provoking (5)
8 Anxiety (7)
11 Available from publisher (2,5)
14 Faint suspicion (7)
17 In a risky situation (2,4,3)
18 Decisive gun battle (5-3)
19 Amount short (7)
21 Alleged reason (7)
22 Furthest (6)
24 Strained (5)
26 Responsibility (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 4029

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 9, Sh-are-out 10, Two (too) 11, Em-ploy 12, Knocks 13, Trickle 14, Rake 15, Carried out 17, On and off 18, Co.-nsort 19, Draw 21, Ho-V-ers 24, Demanding a recount 27, Ma-l-den 29, (y)Earn 30, F-ash-I-on 33, Brighten (Brighton) 35, Cons-piracy 36, A-no-n 37, Re-s'ti-ve (rev) 38, L-eth-al 40, Se-veR-e 41, Eye (I) 42, Steer-age.
DOWN: 1, Think aloud 2, (h) Er-I-C 3, For-swear 4, Station 5, Look for-ward 6, Telepathic 7, Spa-red 8, Looks for 10, Twist 16, Re-sum-ed 20, Roger 22, Voucher 23, Hide-and-seek 25, Non-starter 26, Took charge 28, Ar-rang-ed 31, Ap- palled 32, In-tense 34, Gan-der (rev) 35, Chime 39, Turn.

EASY
ACROSS: 9, Spacious 10, Gnu 11, Eraser 12, Loathe 13, Inferno 14, West 15, Aggressive 17, Engaging 18, Taffeta 19, Eros 21, Napkin 24, Shrouded in mystery 27, Advent 29, Puny 30, Gorilla 33, Misnomer 35, Motherhood 36, Opus 37, Trivial 38, Liable 40, Annual 41, Eat 42, Shocking.
DOWN: 1, Up for grabs 2, Scat 3, Somerset 4, Aspirin 5, Quarrelsome 6, Belongings 7, Earwig 8, Helsinki 10, Gaffe 16, Referee 20, Reign 22, Peevish 23, Jeopardised 25, Ultimately 26, Yellow line 28, Dripping 31, Overlook 32, Utilise 34, Nosh-up 35, Moist 39, Asks.

SU DO KU X - 3842

	8	9		2			6	
								1
	6						4	
				4			3	
		7	5					
8	5			6				7
			2				1	
4				1			9	

SOLUTION TO 3841

9	3	2	4	8	6	5	7	1
8	5	6	7	1	3	9	4	2
7	1	4	9	2	5	8	6	3
3	8	5	6	9	2	4	1	7
4	7	9	1	3	8	2	5	6
2	6	1	5	4	7	3	8	9
5	2	7	8	6	9	1	3	4
1	9	8	3	7	4	6	2	5
6	4	3	2	5	1	7	9	8

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

REFORM IN REVERSE GEAR?

Over 63% applicants in 2025-26 yet to receive incentive

Red tape hinders aid for inter-caste marriages involving SCs

SUJAY B M
BENGALURU, DHNS

A progressive scheme to encourage inter-caste marriages involving Scheduled Caste persons by providing financial incentive has failed to take off effectively due to administrative roadblocks and bureaucratic inertia.

In 2025-26 alone, over 63% of the applicants (3,319 out of a total 5,210 applications) who applied for the incentive are yet to get their first-instalment payments. The full amount has been sanctioned to merely 27 applicants (0.51%).

Though the pendency is much lesser for previous years, it still stands at a significant 1,492 of the 5,137 applications (29.04%). An assessment of the entire data from 2015-16 (till Feb 28) shows that 5,591 applicants are yet to get their first instalment, including 9 applications submitted as far back as 2017-18.

Under the scheme, the couple gets Rs 3 lakh when an SC woman marries a non-SC man, while the couple gets an incentive of Rs 2.5 lakh when an SC man marries a non-SC girl (the woman should be aged between 18-42 years, the man should be 21-45 and their joint income per year shouldn't cross Rs 5 lakh).

PROGRESS REPORT

Year	Total applications	1st instalment approved for	Full amount approved for	Pending applications
2025-26	**5,210**	**888**	**27**	**3,319**
2024-25	5,137	2,286	744	1492
Total*	**38,351**	**5,982**	**18,751**	**5,591**

*(since 2015-16) Source: Social Welfare Dept (as on Feb 28)

According to sources, most of the inter-caste marriages involving an SC person are when the man is from the SC community. To encourage SC women to also marry outside the caste, a higher incentive has been allocated for such instances, they said.

In the interim 2018-19 Budget, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah (then in his first term) had announced to increase the incentive to Rs 3 lakh when the man is from the SC community, and Rs 5 lakh when the woman is from the SC community. However, this has not yet materialised.

At present, the money is provided in two instalments — Rs 1.5 lakh each (when girl is from SC community), and Rs 1.25 lakh each (when man is from the SC community).

While one half will be transferred through RTGS/NEFT to a joint account in the name of the couple, the second half will be provided through fixed deposit, which the couple cannot use for three years.

Puneeth, an applicant from Kallanduru in Kolar taluk, said he had applied 3-4 months ago, but was yet to get his first instalment.

Kumari (name changed) said her sister, a resident of Mysuru, had applied for the scheme around 9-10 months ago, but hadn't got any money yet.

"The application has been verified, but the department staff tell us they don't have funds. My sister applied in 2025-26, but even many who applied in 2024-25 are yet to get the money".

The funding for the scheme is shared between the union and state governments at 50:50 ratio. According to an official in the social welfare department, the dues were due to non-payment of grants by the union government.

"Recently, limited grants were released by the union government (around 4 crore), follwing which we cleared some of the earlier dues. As and when the grants flow in, the remaining dues will be cleared," the official added.

A senior offical said corruption denied the benefit to many genuine applicants, while bureaucratic roadblocks kept delaying it indefinitely.

"Once the couple submits an application, SWD officials have to update it on the software. At this level, there is lot of corruption. Secondly, the process demands a host of documents and details. It also includes physical verification by department officials at the couple's residence. These processes sometimes take around 6 months, thus delaying fund disbursal."

The friction with the union government adds another layer to the problems.

The official called for greater coordination between the union and state governments.

Karnataka also has a scheme providing Rs 2 lakh for intra-caste marriages within SCs. The measure is aimed at promoting such marriages, which are quite rare.

Under this, 970 out of 3,566 applications (27.2%) from 2017-18 to 2025-26 are still pending.

RGUHS sets up Kannada Sangha to promote language

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) has constituted the 'Bhuvaneshwari Kannada Sangha' to strengthen and implement Kannada at all levels within the university.

The decision follows a recent review meeting conducted by the Kannada Development Authority (KDA) at the university.

Based on the discussions, the authorities resolved to form the association, which will be headed by the vice-chancellor.

According to a circular issued by the university, the Sangha will ensure the implementation of Kannada in administration, printing, and other official work.

As per the notification, the Sangha will monitor and promote the use of Kannada in university administration and encourage officials and staff to correspond and write in Kannada.

It will also focus on publishing books on health sciences and health-related awareness topics in Kannada to make technical knowledge accessible to the wider public. Efforts will be made to publish material on healthy lifestyles in simple Kannada to improve community awareness.

If my brother is destined to be CM, he will be, says D K Suresh

'Promised guarantees before polls, can't back out of them now'

BENGALURU, DHNS

Deputy chief minister D K Shivakumar's brother and former MP D K Suresh on Saturday chose to downplay the dinner meeting of legislators that has sparked speculations over a factional mobilisation.

"If it is in his destiny, my brother (Shivakumar) will become chief minister. If destiny does not favour, no one can make it happen," Suresh told reporters here. Asked if his words should be construed as defeat and whether he had "given up arms", Suresh said, "To give up arms, one must first have them. I never had any".

When reminded of his earlier claims that patience was his weapon, he said, "Even now, I believe patience is necessary".

Noting that political issues should be resolved amicably, the former MP said politics needed no weapons or warfare.

Suresh denied he had any information about the Delhi visit of Shivakumar 's supporters to lobby for their leader.

D K SURESH
Former MP

"Whether it is a burden or otherwise should not be an afterthought. They should have been thought over before making the promise. Now, the guarantees should be implemented for all five years,

"You should ask the MLAs concerned and I have no information about the meeting or their decision to travel to Delhi. The party will examine their views," he said. While Shivakumar has acknowledged that the five guarantees are a "burden" on the state's exchequer, but has asserted that the govgernment will continue them, Suresh justified the expenditure of Rs 1.2 lakh crore on them. He said the guarantees were promises made to the people and must be honoured.

"The party president, the chief minister and others promised these guarantees. We must implement them," he said.

"Whether it is a burden or otherwise should not be an afterthought. They should have been thought over before making the promise. Now, the guarantees should be implemented for all five years," said Suresh.

He added that the guarantees were meant for the poor and the wealthy should not be availing them.

MLC Bhoje Gowda stranded at Dubai airport

CHIKKAMAGALURU, DHNS: MLC S L Bhoje Gowda is stranded at Dubai airport following the cancellation of flights after the closure of the Iran airspace.

"I was supposed to travel from Johannesburg to India via Dubai. However, all flight operations in Dubai have been suspended. We were made to get off the aircraft after boarding. No one is informing us about what will happen next".

He said everyone present there was anxious. "The mobile phone battery is also running low. As the airport is crowded, it is difficult even to find a place to charge the phone. No one is telling us what we should do," he added.

"Only those who have a visa are being allowed to leave the airport. I have a US visa. However, it is also important to consider how safe it will be if we step out. So, I am staying here with my wife. As of now, there is no immediate problem, but there is anxiety about what will happen next," he said.

National Science Day observed at VIT-AP University

The School of Advanced Sciences (SAS), VIT-AP University, held a vibrant programme to mark National Science Day, encouraging students to cultivate curiosity, logical thinking and a scientific attitude. Students from 30 schools in Guntur and Vijayawada participated in the event. The winners in various competitions received prizes.

Chief guest A S Kiran Kumar speaks at the event.

A S Kiran Kumar, former Chairman, ISRO, was the chief guest while Prof Prasanta K Panigrahi, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Kolkata, was the guest of honour. Prof Rao Tatavarti, a former DRDO scientist and Dr Rajkumar Elagiri Ramalingam, AI Governance Leader, Mphasis, Bengaluru, also attended the event.

"Technology is evolving every day. This is the time for students to explore the power of emerging technologies and shape their skills to become future leaders of India. By embracing science and innovation, you can help the nation achieve its vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047", said Kiran Kumar.

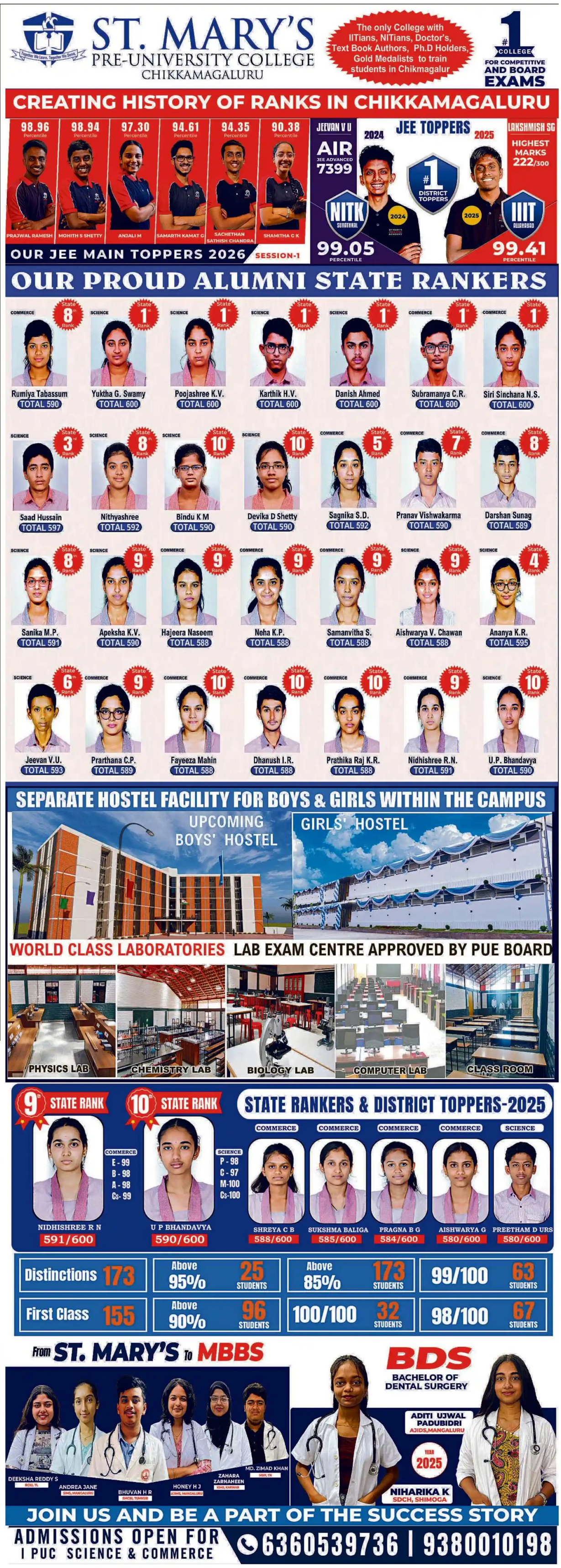
Prof Panigrahi said National Science Day encourages students to question, experiment and explore new ideas that can solve real-world problems and strengthen the nation's future.

Prof Tatavarti stated that the day serves as an opportunity for students to cultivate curiosity and a scientific temper. The youth of India must actively engage in science and innovation to make the country self-reliant and globally competitive, particularly in space, technology and research, he said.

Dr Ramalingam underscored the relevance of scientific thinking in industry. Students must combine technological expertise with ethical responsibility and problem-solving abilities to drive sustainable growth and innovation, he stated.

Dr P Arulmozhivarman, Vice Chancellor, VIT-AP University, said, "National Science Day reinforces our commitment to fostering a strong research culture and nurturing innovative thinkers. At VIT-AP University, we strive to create an ecosystem where students are encouraged to question, experiment and transform ideas into impactful solutions for society".

Curated by DH Brandspot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OUR PROUD ALUMNI STATE RANKERS
Rumiya Tabassum TOTAL 590
Yuktha G. Swamy TOTAL 600
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Karthik H.V. TOTAL 600
Danish Ahmed TOTAL 600
Subramanya C.R. TOTAL 600
Siri Sinchana N.S. TOTAL 600
Saad Hussain TOTAL 597
Nithyashree TOTAL 592
Bindu K M TOTAL 590
Devika D Shetty TOTAL 590
Sagnika S.D. TOTAL 592
Pranav Vishwakarma TOTAL 590
Darshan Sunag TOTAL 589
Sanika M.P. TOTAL 591
Apeksha K.V. TOTAL 590
Hajeera Naseem TOTAL 588
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Aishwarya V. Chawan TOTAL 588
Ananya K.R. TOTAL 595
Jeevan V.U. TOTAL 593
Prarthana C.P. TOTAL 589
Fayeeza Mahin TOTAL 588
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STATE RANKERS & DISTRICT TOPPERS-2025
SHREYA C B 588/600
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PREETHAM D URS 580/600
Distinctions 173
Above 95% 25 STUDENTS
Above 85% 173 STUDENTS
99/100 63 STUDENTS
First Class 155
Above 90% 96 STUDENTS
100/100 32 STUDENTS
98/100 67 STUDENTS
From ST. MARY'S To MBBS
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US, Israel attack Iran; Tehran strikes back, fires missiles at Gulf nations

Iran, From Page 1

Shrapnel from an Iranian missile attack on the UAE capital killed one person, state media said. The UN Security Council said it would meet Saturday afternoon. In a letter to the council, Araghchi said "all bases, facilities, and assets of the hostile forces in the region shall be regarded as legitimate military objectives."

Israel said the operation has been planned for months with the United States. Air Force pilots were striking "hundreds of targets across Iran" in coordination with US strikes, Israeli military chief of staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir said in a statement.

The strikes during the holy fasting month of Ramadan opened a new chapter in US intervention in Iran, marking the second time in eight months that the Trump administration has attacked the Islamic Republic during talks over its nuclear program.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said: "The IRGC's missiles and drones have struck the headquarters of the US Navy's Fifth Fleet in Bahrain and other American bases in Qatar and the UAE, as well as military and security centres in the heart of the occupied territories (Israel), with severe blows."

Pvt bus operators seek more time to comply with safety norms

Transport officials to decide deadline extension on Monday

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Private bus operators in Bengaluru have requested the Transport department for an extension of the February 28 deadline for compliance of safety measures for both regular and the sleeper buses.

About two weeks ago, the Transport department, had set the deadline in light of a series of fatal accidents, involving private sleeper buses. The directive called for the removal of the partition door behind the driver in all sleeper buses, installation of fire extinguishers of at least 10 kg in all sleeper buses, and display of a design layout drawing clearly indicating emergency exists, the location of fire extinguishers and roof hatches, in a place easily visible and readable to passengers in all buses, among other safety measures.

Workshops busy

However, the tight deadline has led to long queues at body-building workshops in the city, bus operators told *DH*. "One of the things pointed out in the directive is the removal of luggage carriers. This is something that is taking time, as most of the older buses have it as it was allowed back to them. Now that all operators are trying to remove them, the workshops are all backed up. They are only accepting two buses from each operator per day," said Ayush Jain, proprietor, Sugama Tourists.

Modification of sleeper buses remained the trickiest part, shared operators.

Another matter of concern remains the low supply of Fire Detection and Suppression System (FDSS). Most bus operators *DH* spoke to shared concerns about the delayed supply of FDSS. "It's been 48 days since we placed an order for the FDSS, but we've not yet received the complete order. Since there are only a few certified FDSS suppliers in India, they are unable to match the demand as orders are flowing in from across the country. Our supplier told us that they have 1,800 orders to fulfil, which was causing the delay," said Balakrishna Rai, manager (operations), SRS Travels.

Extension of deadline

An association of private bus owners have written to Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy and the transport department, asking for an extension of time to ensure all buses are fitted with the FDSS before inspections begin. "The FDSS manufacturers have written to us, asking for three month's time to meet all the orders in the state, as orders have been placed for over 1,000 buses. We have presented the same letters to the Minister and requested an extension. Apart from this, we have also written to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) about how the removal of the partition door behind the driver would be impractical as it would hinder the air conditioning onboard," elaborated Rajesh Venkat, owner of Rajesh Transports, and secretary of Karnataka Bus Operators Association.

The Transport Department will be meeting on Monday to decide whether a time period extension would be feasible, said Yogeesh A M, Commissioner for Transport and Road Safety.

About two weeks ago, the Transport department set February 28 deadline for private buses to comply with safety norms in the wake of a series of fatal accidents, involving private sleeper buses in the state. DH FILE PHOTO

> **RAJESH VENKAT**
> Secretary, Karnataka Bus Operators' Association
>
> "The FDSS manufacturers have written to us, asking for three months' time to meet all the orders in the state, as orders have been placed for over 1,000 buses. We have presented the same letters to the Minister and requested an extension. Apart from this, we have also written to the MoRTH about how the removal of the partition door behind the driver would be impractical as it would hinder the air conditioning onboard.

K'taka planning panel pushes for water security

Water scarcity, From Page 3

Karnataka witnessed moderate warming between 1985 and 2015, with the maximum temperature increase ranging from 0.18°C to 0.61°C, while minimum temperatures rose by 0.3°C to 0.65°C. The last decade has been the warmest so far, with parts of north Karnataka recording 45.4°C. A November 2024 study has projected a further 2°C to 2.5°C rise in temperatures across north and central Karnataka over the next decade, cautioned the panel.

Climate variability has led to losses in agriculture and horticulture, besides damaging buildings and water and sanitation infrastructure. To address desertification risks in the northern belt, the panel proposed a 350-km "green wall" from Belagavi to Bidar through large-scale afforestation and agroforestry.

Mooting district-level weather maps and telemetric rain gauge data to issue advisories to farmers on crop planning, soil moisture management and irrigation scheduling, Patil said, "Integration of weather and agricultural intelligence could reduce pesticide and fertiliser usage by 15–25%, save 20–30% irrigation water, and reduce yield losses from extreme weather by 10–15%, while also lowering greenhouse gas emissions through reduced diesel and electricity consumption."

Noting that 234 major mining leases and 4,319 minor leases are operational in the state, the panel called for stronger environmental impact assessments, structural integrity audits of abandoned mines and digital monitoring of air pollution, groundwater contamination, ground vibration and radiation through CSR funds and the District Mineral Foundation.

The report added that the State Water Policy-2019 has shifted focus from supply-side to demand-side water management, stressing that integrating climate science, groundwater governance and farm-level planning will be critical to safeguarding Karnataka's agriculture and water security amid rising climate risks.

Second PU student dies hours before board exam

BELAGAVI, DHNS: A second PU student died of cardiac arrest at her house hours before the board exams at Bambalwad village in Chikkodi taluk of Belagavi district on Saturday.

Bhumika Kareppa Malinge (17), a student of CSS College in the town, collapsed while taking bath. She died en route to hospital. Department of Pre-University Education, Deputy Director, Chikkodi, Pandurang Bhandare confirmed the incident saying Bhumika suffered cardiac arrest at home and succumbed on the way to hospital.

Student dies in accident

Meanwhile, a class 10 student died and his classmate sustained serious injuries after their bike crashed into a pick-up vehicle on Bidarkundi Road in Muddebihal, Vijayapura district, on Saturday.

Bhumika Malinge

According to police, Mahesh Basappa Madar (16) of Gonal village died on the spot while Srishail Siddanna Budhihal (16) of Bidarkundi village suffered grievous injuries. Srishail has been rushed to a hospital in Bagalkot for treatment.

The mishap occurred when they were returning home after writing SSLC preparatory exams at Shantala high school in the town. The Muddebihal police have registered a case.

'Daylight dacoity': High Court upholds denotification order, blasts KIADB

HC, from Page 3

A report revealed that certain firms with no experience either in software production or computer-related field were allotted lands, prompting the government to denotify 36 guntas of land in May 2009.

On March 6, 2013, a single bench allowed the petition filed by Royal Fragrances Private Limited and quashed the denotification order, following which the land owners approached the division bench. The entire material with respect to acquisition and allotment of 150 acres of land in Kariyammanna Agrahara and Devarabesanahalli villages was perused by the division bench.

The bench cited a 2004 report by the Chief Executive Officer of the KIADB to the Principal Secretary, Department of Commerce and Industries.

The report stated that five entities — Vikas Telecom Limited, Royal Fragrances Pvt. Ltd, Premel Project Pvt. Ltd, Supreme Build Cap Pvt. Ltd and Adarsha Prime Project Pvt. Ltd — had no experience or expertise and there is no evidence that they are running software or computer-related industries.

The report also stated that the three firms — Vikas Telecom, Supreme Build Cap and Royal Fragrances — belonged to the same set of directors represented by Mithilesh Kumar Tripati and Santhosh Garg.

As per the memorandum of association, the bench noted, Royal Fragrances was into the production of gutka. The bench said such an application ought to have been thrown in the dustbin but was acted upon with alacrity.

"On the said application, the entire state machinery was put into high-speed motion to acquire the land for such an applicant. The real purpose of the land acquisition for the said company was not the industrial development in the state, but to put the valuable assets for meagre amount in their hands to develop the real estate for residential and commercial purposes," the division bench said.

The bench further observed that the KIADB's benevolence towards the company can be measured from the fact that it allotted 29 acres and 7.5 guntas of land as against the company's proposal for 12 acres.

"The concept of 'eminent domain' is the State's sovereign power to compulsorily take private property for public use and public purposes. However, this power has to be exercised only for the public purpose subject to the constitutional limits. The State cannot acquire the property of private people to create the wealth in an illegal, arbitrary and mala fide manner in favour of private individuals without there being any public purpose," the bench said.

NATION on Sunday

AAIB flags low visibility in Ajit Pawar plane crash

Preliminary report cites fog, lack of navigational aids and runway issues

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has cited low visibility, a lack of meteorological facilities, and operational gaps in the preliminary findings into the January 28 Learjet crash at the Pune district's Baramati airport that claimed five lives, including that of then Maharashtra deputy chief minister and NCP president Ajit Pawar.

The business jet was operating a non-scheduled flight from Mumbai to Baramati, and crashed around 8.46 am.

The airfield is primarily used for flight-training operations, with two flight-training organisations (FTOs) having their base there. The airport has two temporary air traffic control (ATC) towers, both being operated and maintained by students and instructors of the FTOs for their respective flight operations and VIP flights.

The AAIB report pointed out that the airfield did not have any navigational aids other than windsocks, and "no windsock was available towards the runway 11 side".

SHORTCOMINGS

- Airfield did not have any navigational aids other than windsocks
- No windsock was available towards runway 11
- Last runway re-carpeting done in March 2016
- This resulted in fading of runway markings and presence of loose gravel
- Visibility was 3,000 m, below required 5,000 m

The last runway re-carpeting was in March 2016, which resulted in the fading of runway markings and loose gravel on the surface.

More details

Elaborating on the sequence of events, the AAIB report stated that on the day of the accident, the tower was manned by a ground instructor of one of the FTOs.

The flight crew was told that visibility was 3,000 metres, said the report, noting that this was well below the minimum required for VFR flight, which is 5000 metres. The AAIB also concluded that there was "very shallow fog in patches" in Baramati.

Both the flight data recorders — the Solid-State Flight Data Recorder (SSFDR) and the Solid-State Cockpit Voice Recorder (SSCVR) — were damaged due to exposure to high temperatures during the accident.

'Canada, India to double trade by 2030'

Deal expected to be signed by year-end, says Canada PM

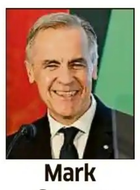
MUMBAI, PTI

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Saturday said his country was negotiating a comprehensive economic partnership deal with India to double two-way trade by 2030.

It is expected to be signed by the end of this year, said Carney while addressing the Canada-India Forum here. The Canadian PM is on a four-day visit to India.

"This is an enormous opportunity for both our countries... But it is about to move to the next level. We should aim much higher, and are aiming much higher, and be more strategic in our partnership. And that's why, immediately after my election last year, our government set out to renew our relationship with India," he said.

"I invited Prime Minister Modi to the G7 Summit in Canada. When he came a few weeks later, we agreed to re-engage across security, energy and technology. A few months later, at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, Prime Minister Modi and I launched a landmark partnership with Australia on critical minerals and technology," Carney said.



Mark Carney

Canada is focused on core areas where it can work together to create that greater sovereignty, greater choice, and greater prosperity for our people, he said.

"That naturally begins with food and energy, given Canada's position as a food and energy superpower," he said, adding that it also extends to nuclear cooperation, from being the most reliable long-term supplier of uranium to building large-scale and SMR (Small Modular Reactors).

"We could also be India's strategic partner in critical minerals and metals for your manufacturing, for your clean tech, and for your nuclear industries. And in the other respect, India can help us to double our grid with clean power by 2040," he added.

India's leadership in AI and the digital economy aligns well with Canada's mission to develop and commercialise those technologies, as well as quantum, to deepen its defence innovation, PM Carney asserted.

"Canada is clear-eyed about the world as it is, and we are equally determined to forge a new path in it. We are a confident and ambitious nation, and that confidence, that ambition, brings us here to India," he said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with LoP in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, party leader Gurjeet Singh Aujla and others during 'Kisan Mazdoor Mahaa Rally' in Punjab. PTI

Will bench those who can't play as team: Rahul to Punjab Cong

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday read the riot act to warring Punjab leaders, warning that the leadership will bench them if they cannot "play as a team".

Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge by his side, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha used the last 90 seconds of his nearly 30-minute address at the "Kisan Mahachaupal" in Punjab's Barnala to send the message of "no tolerance" to factionalism, as the party is heading to the Assembly election in a year.

Punjab Congress is facing intense factionalism, with chief Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Leader of the Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa, and former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi locked in a leadership fight.

Rahul's latest salvo comes a month after the leadership "strongly" warned the senior leaders that indiscipline would not be tolerated, while ruling out replacing Warring as the state-unit chief. It said the party would fight the election under collective leadership, without projecting a face.

At the rally, where Rahul also attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the India-US trade deal, Epstein Files, and China policy, he said, "The last thing I want to tell my friends sitting here (on the dias), I want to send a message from the Congress. Work is done through teamwork. One player alone cannot win the match."

He added: "We have a full team, and I want to give you all this message on behalf of Kharge-ji and myself. Be a team player, or we will bench you. No matter how big a player you may be, I am telling you that no one is bigger than the party. Play with team spirit or Kharge-ji, and I will ensure that we will fix you."

DMK finalises seat-sharing deal with 2 parties

CHENNAI, DHNS: The ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu on Saturday concluded seat-sharing deals with alliance partners, allotting four Assembly seats to the IUML and the MMK — both parties representing Muslims.

Party chief M K Stalin allotted the parties two seats each. While the IUML will contest on its ladder symbol, the MMK candidates will contest on the DMK's Rising Sun symbol.

The DMK also held seat-sharing talks with the Congress. Sources told *DH* that the Congress might settle for 27 or 28 Assembly seats and a Rajya Sabha berth, though the expectation was around 35 seats.

Saturday's talks reportedly ended on a "cordial" and "positive note", with TNCC chief K Selvaperunthagai announcing that the DMK had agreed to allot the Congress a Rajya Sabha berth.

After software, India making its mark in hardware: Modi

SANAND, PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated Micron Technology's semiconductor plant at Sanand in Gujarat, and said that after being known for its strength in software, the country is "firmly establishing its identity" in the hardware sector too.

The inauguration of the US-based company's ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking and Packaging) plant, the first such facility in the country, reflects a deep partnership between India and the United States, he said.

The message has reached the world loud and clear: India is capable, India is competitive, and India is committed, Modi said.

India's message for global investors is "India is ready, India is reliable, and India delivers," and both dynamic market and global opportunities await investors in the country, the PM added.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit at Micron Technology's semiconductor facility in Sanand. PTI

"India, long known for its software strength, is now firmly establishing its identity in the hardware sector as well," he said.

The PM said the event is a testament to the strong cooperation and collaboration between India and the US, especially in the areas of AI and chip technologies where the partnership between the two countries is very important.

"The world witnessed a period of industrial revolution throughout the 20th century. During that time, countries that were ahead in factories, machines, and mass production made rapid progress. But this is the century of the AI revolution, and semiconductors are the bridge to this change. The tiny chip is the medium connecting both the industrial revolution and the AI revolution," he said.

AAP B-Team of BJP: Kharge

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday launched a scathing attack on Arvind Kejriwal, claiming that both the AAP chief and Prime Minister Narendra Modi speak the same "hypocritical" language.

In his remarks a day after Kejriwal was discharged by a court in the liquor scam case, Kharge alleged that the AAP government in Punjab acts like the "B-Team" of the BJP, as it has never joined the struggles of farmers, labourers and youth. The Congress on Friday described the court relief for Kejriwal as a "predictable script" from the BJP in favour of "convenient allies" ahead of Gujarat and Punjab elections.

COURTING A CASTE | Move, aimed at consolidating vote bank, could also undermine CM

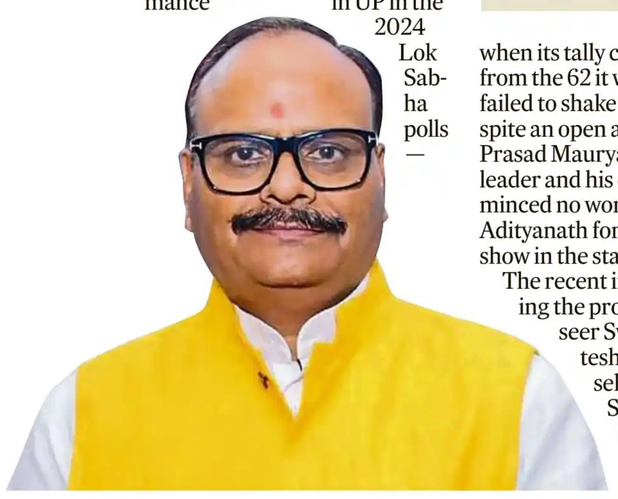
Brajesh Pathak's Brahmin outreach rattles Adityanath

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

Ever since saffron-clad Yogi Adityanath became the Uttar Pradesh chief minister following the BJP's landslide victory in the 2017 Assembly elections, he has had almost a free run: His has been the last word, be it the government or his party in the state.

In fact, Adityanath's grip on his government was so strong that he even "refused" to appoint bureaucrat-turned-politician A K Sharma, considered close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as his deputy in his first term. Sharma had to be content with a Cabinet berth.

Even the BJP's dismal performance in UP in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls — when its tally came down to 33 from the 62 it won in 2019 — failed to shake his position despite an open attack by Keshav Prasad Maurya, a senior OBC leader and his deputy, who minced no words in blaming Adityanath for the party's poor show in the state.



The recent incident involving the prominent Hindu seer Swami Avimukteshwaranand, the self-proclaimed Shankaracharya of Jyotish Peeth, during the "Magh Mela" — an annual ritual on the banks of the Ganga at Prayagraj — has put Adityanath in a difficult situation.

The seer was prevented from proceeding toward Ganga for a holy dip, and the "Batuk Brahmins" — celibate Hindu children who take initiation in gurukuls for Vedic education, all disciples of the religious leader — were roughed up by the police.

Videos surfaced on social media purportedly showing the police dragging the "batuks" by their "shikha" — a traditional tuft of hair kept on the crown of the head by Brahmins as a symbol of devotion.

Subsequently, Brahmin outfits strongly slammed the administration, and even called the BJP "anti-Brahmin". Meanwhile, Adityanath launched a barrage of attacks on the seer.

Pathak's path

It was under these circumstances that Adityanath's deputy, Brajesh Pathak, performed what was perceived as a damage-control exercise: He, to the surprise of many in the BJP, performed a "batuk puja" with 101 "batuks".

With Brahmin leaders and their outfits slamming the BJP government for "humiliating the community" and Avimukteshwaranand questioning Adityanath's Hindu credentials, Pathak's move was seen as an attempt to placate the electorally influential community and blunt rivals' campaigns to smear the BJP as "anti-Brahmin".

"Dragging the batuks by their shikhas is maha paap (a great sin)," said Pathak in the Assembly after being cornered by the Opposition on the issue.

Political analysts opined that Pathak — once considered to be close to BSP chief Mayawati before he left that party to join the BJP in 2016, a year before the 2017 Assembly polls — would not have taken a diametrically opposite stand on the Avimukteshwaranand issue without the "blessing" of the party high command.

"It is well known that Adityanath always wants to have his way... Pathak's open criticism of the administration in dealing with the seer will certainly not go down well with the chief minister," said a Lucknow-based analyst.

He said that the BJP had tasked Pathak with primarily expanding its support base in the Brahmin community. "Pathak's importance lies in his ability to ensure the Brahmins' support to the party, and he knows that very well," noted the analyst.

The effect

Interestingly, Pathak's outreach to the Brahmins comes close on the heels of a meeting with the BJP's 50-odd Brahmin lawmakers to discuss what many of them said was the community's "marginalisation" in the state's caste politics.

Some analysts and UP BJP leaders — especially those hailing from the "Thakur" community — feel that Pathak's outreach and taking a different line may be aimed at sending a message to the Brahmin MLAs that he is ready to back them.

Newly-appointed UP BJP president Pankaj Chaudhary had taken exception to the meeting and warned against holding caste-specific gatherings, stating that such acts would be viewed as "indiscipline". A similar meeting of the party's Thakur MLAs had taken place earlier, but the leadership had not questioned it.

Chaudhary's remarks, however, evoked a sharp but measured response from one of the Brahmin MLAs.

"Brahmins are considered guides and thinkers in the Sanatan traditions. Wherever Brahmins gather, there is discussion of knowledge and reason that strengthens the Hindu identity. The Brahmins unite the society and not divide it," said BJP lawmaker Panchananda Pathak, indicating a rift within the party on the issue.

While it is too early to predict how Adityanath will deal with the situation, it will be interesting to see if Pathak continues to chart this course of action, even if it means risking the CM's wrath.

CHANGE IN ORDER?

- Adityanath has always had the last word when it comes to the UP government or the BJP's state unit
- However, Brajesh Pathak's overtures towards Brahmins appear to undercut his influence
- That Adityanath has been in an open tussle with a self-proclaimed Shankaracharya has only exacerbated matters
- Experts say Pathak's moves could not have happened without the BJP leadership's green light
- How Adityanath will respond is a question only time will answer

Debris lies in the aftermath of the cracker unit blast in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district on Saturday. PTI

Wedding rush, gala order blamed for Andhra blast

S N V SUDHIR
HYDERABAD, DHNS

A nearby village festival and the ongoing wedding season, with bulk orders piling up, appeared to have turned fatal for 20 workers killed in Saturday's blast at a fireworks unit in Vetlapalem in Andhra Pradesh's Kakinada district.

The heat from the explosion was so intense that the iron beams of the sheds melted. Families identified the victims using watches, anklets, and clothes. The police were yet to identify some remains.

"My father left home after lunch. I heard of the fire mishap within half an hour. When I rushed here, I couldn't even identify him," said a boy.

Meanwhile, the unit's owner, Adabala Veerababu, is absconding. His father, Adabala Sreenu, is among the deceased.

The undivided-Godavari districts in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are fireworks-making hubs. Beyond Deepavali, crackers feature in weddings and village festivals, keeping units busy.

At Suryashree Fireworks, workers were reportedly toiling on extended shifts to fulfil a major order for the "Singaramma Chintha Jathara" festival, slated for March 3 in a nearby village.

Bulk orders for weddings were said to have fuelled the frenzy. After all, the wedding season had just begun after a long spell of inauspicious months. The auspicious period would last till May-end.

The sudden demand for crackers overwhelmed nearby units. Suryashree, locally famous and operating for over two decades, had extra orders, and many workers had been employed for 15 years there. They were said to have been pulling overtime for days, earning Rs 1,500–2,000 daily for 6 am-8 pm shifts.

"Excess raw-material stock, likely above permissible limits, is suspected, given the orders. Fire-safety measures were nominal, inadequate for such mishaps. The inquiry will probe all this," said a senior government official.

The accident is Andhra Pradesh's deadliest in over a decade. A similar tragedy struck in October 2014, when a blast at Vakatippa village near Kakinada claimed 16 lives.

India calls for calm after US-Israel strike on Iran

Issues advisories to Indians in Gulf nations to remain vigilant

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Hours after a massive military confrontation broke out in West Asia, India on Saturday asked Iran, Israel, and the USA to "exercise restraint and avoid escalation," while embassies in Iran and other Gulf nations advised Indian residents "to avoid unnecessary movements and remain indoors" as far as possible.

"India is deeply concerned at the recent developments in Iran and the Gulf region. We urge all sides to exercise restraint, avoid escalation, and prioritise the safety of civilians," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a brief statement, reacting to the fast-evolving situation after a joint US-Israel strike on Iran.

"Dialogue and diplomacy should be pursued to de-escalate tensions and address underlying issues. Sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states must be respected."

Indian missions in the region are in touch with Indians and have issued advisories asking them to remain vigilant, stay in contact with the missions, and follow local security guidance.

The Indian embassy in Tehran asked Indian nationals to exercise extreme caution, avoid unnecessary movements, and remain indoors as far as possible. Similar advisories have been issued by the embassies in the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain.

Meanwhile, defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh underscored the importance of maintaining India's "strategic partnerships" in West Asia.

"The events are moving pretty fast. In West Asia, we have a large diaspora. We will have to continue to maintain our strategic partnerships," Singh said at a conclave in Delhi.

Notably, about 10 days ago, both Iran and the US participated in the Indian Navy's International Fleet Review and Milan 2026 exercises at Visakhapatnam. Iran's Moudge-class frigate IRIS Dena and a delegation were part of the show.

IN-DIASPORA

- Little over 10,000 Indians, including students, living in Iran
- The Indian diaspora in Israel comprises over 41,000 people
- New Delhi not immediately considering evacuating Indian nationals from Iran or Israel, sources said

Stranded passengers wait outside a terminal, amid cancellation of flights to West Asia due to the US and Israel strikes on Iran, at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, in New Delhi. PTI

Indian carriers suspend West Asia flights

NEW DELHI, DHNS: With tensions escalating in West Asia, the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation on Saturday asked Indian airlines to continuously monitor airspace restrictions and ensure the timely rerouting or diversion of flights.

Air India, Air India Express and IndiGo said they had temporarily suspended flights to and from West Asia.

An Air India Delhi-Tel Aviv flight was diverted to Mumbai due to the closure of Israeli airspace, with Flightradar24.com saying it was airborne for over five hours and decided to return when it was in Saudi Arabian airspace.

Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu chaired a high-level meeting to review preparedness and response measures in the civil aviation sector. Ministry, Airports Authority of India (AAI), and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) officials, airline operators, and major airport operators attended the meeting, conducted via video conferencing.

"Indian carriers operating international services have been advised to continuously monitor airspace advisories, NOTAMs, and route restrictions issued by the authorities concerned," an official statement said. "Airlines have been directed to ensure timely rerouting or diversion of flights, wherever required, strictly in accordance with global safety protocols and established contingency planning procedures," it said.

DGCA issues advisory

The DGCA on Saturday asked Indian operators to avoid operating within the airspace of 11 countries in the region, saying there could be high probability of "spill-over risks" like misidentification of civil aircraft.

Iran may target all US, Israeli bases in West Asia: Envoy

NEW DELHI, PTI: Iran has declared all US and Israeli bases and assets in the Middle East as "legitimate targets" in the event of military aggression against it, Iran's Ambassador to India Mohammad Fathali said on Saturday.

Fathali invoked Iran's right to self-defence under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and affirmed that, as a sovereign state, Iran would take all necessary steps to protect its territorial integrity, independence and its people.

Mohammad Fathali

"If we are attacked militarily, all bases and assets of the United States and the Zionist regime in the region will be considered legitimate targets," he said at the Iranian Culture Centre here.

He stressed that Iran's armed forces were fully prepared for defence, just as they had been for dialogue. "We exhausted every avenue to prevent war. Now, we will defend our homeland," he said.

The envoy underlined that the aggression took place despite ongoing diplomatic efforts between Iran and the US. "Despite deep reservations stemming from past experiences, including the recent 12-day war, Iran persisted with negotiations to show our commitment to peace and remove any pretext for conflict," he said.

"However, today's coordinated action by the US and the Zionist regime once again confirms their unreliability. It reveals their real aim: continued pressure, threats and direct military aggression to pursue illegitimate interests," said the envoy.

The Iranian ambassador urged the neighbouring Gulf nations "to understand the current situation" and work for the region's stability. "We respect our neighbours and seek stability in our region. We expect these countries to understand the current situation and to help prevent further escalation by putting pressure on the aggressors," he emphasised.

The ambassador urged the United Nations and the Security Council to fulfil their responsibilities. "This serious violation of international law and the UN Charter cannot remain unaddressed. The international community must act against an action that endangers peace in the region and beyond," he said.

Congress flags 'grave' impact for India

NEW DELHI, DHNS: As Israel and the United States launched a joint assault on Iran, Congress on Saturday condemned the attack and criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Israel, saying it created a "perception of partisan alignment and tacit endorsement of unprovoked aggression" and warned that it could have "grave strategic consequences" for the country.

Urging the government to take "immediate and proactive measures to safeguard our people," Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, said the "rapidly escalating hostilities" between the US, Israel and Iran were "deeply concerning," and stressed that the safety and security of every Indian citizen across West Asia must remain the highest priority.

Party's Foreign Affairs Department head Salman Khurshid said any perception of political endorsement of military escalation is deeply antithetical to New Delhi's commitment to a rules-based international order and the UN Charter.

Party general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the joint assault on Iran came two days after Modi celebrated his visit to Israel, and this was fully expected given their military buildup in the last few months.

"Modi nevertheless chose to go to Israel, where he displayed the highest moral cowardice. He declared that India stood with Israel and got himself an award for saying so. This Israel visit was shameful, and it is even more so in light of the war that has been launched by two of Modi's good friends," he said.

India Inc fears rise in logistics, insurance costs

NEW DELHI, PTI: With a joint attack by the US and Israel on Iran triggering a massive military confrontation in West Asia, Indian exporters on Saturday said the development is expected to push transportation and insurance costs up, potentially disrupting the outbound shipments to the US and Europe.

They said that any prolonged tensions in the region could impact oil prices and that will have implications on input costs and current stability.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) President SC Ralhan said the ongoing conflict has already begun to disrupt established global logistics channels.

"Air routes are being altered, and maritime trade through the Red Sea and key Gulf straits faces heightened uncertainty. If diversions become prolonged, shipments may increasingly have to reroute via the Cape of Good Hope, adding an estimated 15–20 days to transit time for Europe and the US," Ralha said.

While Indian exporters have demonstrated resilience in navigating past disruptions, sustained instability in these critical trade corridors would warrant close monitoring and calibrated policy support to maintain competitiveness, he said.

Sharing similar views, Apparel Export Promotion Council Chairman A Sakthivel said: "We are worried that our shipment may get delayed due to this tension. We may have to take long routes to send our goods to Europe, USA and other western countries".

Red Sea risks raise shipping cost

India relies heavily on the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait for crude oil, LNG imports and trade with key markets.

The Bab-el-Mandeb–Red Sea–Suez Canal corridor is shorter and faster than the Cape of Good Hope route, making it the preferred shipping lane.

Around 65% of India's crude imports, including supplies from Iraq and Saudi Arabia, transit through the Suez Canal, which is also vital for trade with Europe and North Africa.

Any disruption in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, a key link between the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, could impact this flow. Rerouting via the Cape of Good Hope would add 14–20 days to voyages and raise freight and insurance costs.

Jaishankar speaks to foreign ministers of Iran & Israel

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday held separate phone conversations with Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and his Israeli counterpart Gideon Sa'ar as West Asia reeled under massive tension.

Jaishankar conveyed to Araghchi India's deep concern over the developments in Iran and the region.

Mumbai airport to halt diversions after parking crunch

Mumbai airport on Saturday issued a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) stating it will not accept any flight diversions until 8 am on Sunday amid disruptions following US strikes on Iran. The move was prompted by a shortage of parking bays, with several flights either returning to their origin or diverting to nearby airports, sources said.

WILD ARRIVAL

9 Botswana cheetahs reach Kuno Park; India's count hits 48

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Nine cheetahs from Botswana reached Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, taking India's total cheetah count to 48.

Transported from Africa by the Indian Air Force's C-17 Globemaster and later to Kuno by IAF helicopters, the six females and three males were released into the quarantine facility by the Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

The animals would undergo an acclimatisation and health monitoring phase before a decision was made on their release into the larger landscape, such as Kuno or Gandhisagar Wildlife Sanctuary, sources said.

With this addition, the cheetah population at Kuno stands at 48, including 28 Indian-born cubs. All cheetahs are currently healthy and doing well.

In December 2024, India initiated discussions with Botswana on the transcontinental delivery of cheetahs. Eleven months later, when President Droupadi Murmu visited Botswana, eight cheetahs were formally handed over to India. They were released into quarantine enclosures at Mokolodi Nature Reserve.

An Indian delegation reviewed quarantine arrangements, assessed enclosure conditions, and ensured readiness for international transfer. In December 2025, a Botswana delegation visited India to review final logistical preparations.

This is the third batch of African cheetahs inserted into Kuno, following eight animals airlifted from South Africa in September 2022 and 12 from South Africa in February 2023. Of the first 20 cheetahs, 11 are surviving.

ENERGY RISK SURGES: Regional conflict threatens 20% of global oil supply as exports face disruption

Iran war triggers biggest oil shock in decades

Shipping fears in Strait of Hormuz raise alarm across energy markets

REUTERS

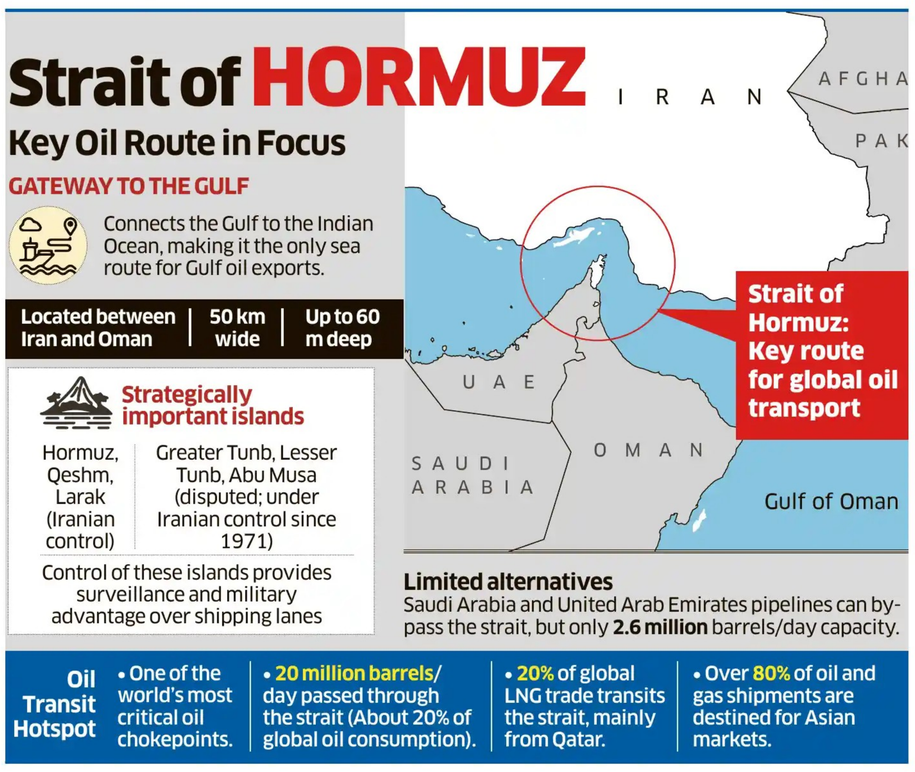
Global energy markets face one of their gravest shocks in decades as joint US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliatory missile attacks across the Gulf disrupt oil exports from the world's most important producing region.

The scale of the disruption will likely be determined by the duration of the conflict, but for now the threat and the uncertainty are already enough to severely impact flows from the region that accounts for 20% of global oil supplies.

Barring a swift resolution, oil prices will likely see steep increases when trading opens on Monday morning. Benchmark Brent crude oil prices rose in recent weeks to around $70 a barrel, their highest since August 2025, as investors braced for military confrontation in the Middle East.

The United States and Israel carried out military strikes on Iran on Saturday, targeting senior leaders and plunging the Middle East into a widening conflict. US President Donald Trump said the attacks would eliminate a security threat to the US and give Iranians an opportunity to topple their rulers.

For now, there is no confirmed damage to oil and gas infrastructure from retaliatory Iranian strikes.


Strait of HORMUZ
Key Oil Route in Focus
GATEWAY TO THE GULF
Connects the Gulf to the Indian Ocean, making it the only sea route for Gulf oil exports.
Located between Iran and Oman
50 km wide
Up to 60 m deep
Strategically important islands
Hormuz, Qeshm, Larak (Iranian control)
Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, Abu Musa (disputed; under Iranian control since 1971)
Control of these islands provides surveillance and military advantage over shipping lanes
IRAN
AFGHA
PAK
UAE
SAUDI ARABIA
OMAN
Gulf of Oman
Strait of Hormuz: Key route for global oil transport
Limited alternatives
Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates pipelines can bypass the strait, but only 2.6 million barrels/day capacity.
Oil Transit Hotspot
• One of the world's most critical oil chokepoints.
• 20 million barrels/day passed through the strait (About 20% of global oil consumption).
• 20% of global LNG trade transits the strait, mainly from Qatar.
• Over 80% of oil and gas shipments are destined for Asian markets.

Explosions were reported in the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, two major oil exporters.

Meanwhile, Qatar, the world's second-largest exporter of liquefied natural gas, said it intercepted missiles aimed at the country. Blasts were also heard in Bahrain and near Iran's Kharg Island, the terminal through which about 90% of its crude exports flow, although shipping data suggests Tehran had transferred most of the oil stored there onto tankers in recent days.

Crucially, there have so far been no reports of disruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman that handles nearly 20 million barrels per day of crude oil and refined products. But the absence of physical damage may not matter much.

The risk that tankers could be stranded inside the Gulf, north of Hormuz, or that vessels could be targeted, is already enough to force producers, traders and shippers to rethink movements of oil and LNG. Reuters has reported that some oil majors and trading houses have suspended shipments through the strait for several days. That caution is unlikely to ease until there is far greater confidence in the safety of the region's sea lanes.

Tanker freight rates, which had already been climbing as tensions escalated, are set to rise further. Benchmark rates for very large crude carriers from the Middle East to China have more than tripled since the start of the year, reflecting both heightened risk and the shrinking pool of willing vessels.

The key questions now are whether energy infrastructure will be directly targeted and how quickly the United States military can secure shipping routes across the Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. It is worth noting that the Strait of Hormuz has never been fully blocked.

While Iran is unlikely to sustain a prolonged blockade, it has the capability to disrupt traffic temporarily. The US Navy would almost certainly respond swiftly, but even short-lived attacks or mine-laying operations could have outsized effects on prices and supply.

KEY OIL ROUTE CLOSED FOR VESSELS

- Iran's Revolutionary Guards sent radio messages on Saturday to vessels warning them they could not enter the Strait of Hormuz, the EU's Red Sea naval mission, Operation Aspides, told AFP in a statement.
- The US Transportation Department also urged commercial vessels on Saturday to stay away from the Gulf after the US and Israel launched heavy bombing attacks on Iran. The Strait of Hormuz, Persian Gulf, Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea are subject to "significant military activity" and "it is recommended that vessels keep clear of this area if possible," the department's Maritime Administration said in a statement.

Chaos & panic grip Tehran as airstrikes shake city

NYT NEWS SERVICE

Just as Iranians began their work week on Saturday morning, US and Israeli strikes sent panicked residents of Tehran into the streets and parents racing back to schools where they had just dropped off their children.

Chaos and uncertainty set in as explosions shook the densely populated city, Iran's capital, according to witnesses who spoke to The New York Times.

Ali, a businessperson from Tehran, said in a text message that he was sitting in his office with many employees when they heard two explosions, along with fighter jets streaking across the sky.

Employees ran screaming out of the building, he said. He, like several other residents who spoke to the Times, asked not to be identified by his full name because he feared for his safety.

From the leafy, upscale district of Mirdamad, resident Hamidreza Zand described seeing at least 10 fighter jets flying overhead as locals ran into the streets and some drivers abandoned cars on streets clogged with traffic. With ambulance sirens wailing in the background, other residents scrambled to pick their children up from school.

"I rushed to school to get my daughter from middle school. The girls were hiding under the stairs and crying," said Ali Zeinalipoor, whom a Times reporter reached on the Clubhouse social media app. "The principal did not know what had happened — everyone was so scared."

From the roof of her apartment in Tehran's northern Velenjak district, Golshan Fathi described seeing a second round of fighter jets.

"People are standing on the roof looking at the sky, pointing down. You can hear women screaming. Some of my neighbours are running to their cars," she said. "It feels like we are in a movie."

In the Pasdaran area, where a large compound belonging to Iran's Revolutionary Guard is located, residents heard multiple explosions that shook their windows.

"My children are crying and scared; we are huddling in the bathroom. We don't know what to do. This is terrifying," Esfandiar, an engineer living in the area, wrote in a text message. As reports of explosions hitting other cities across Iran began to emerge on local media, telecommunications began to fail.

A resident named Mahsa said she was fleeing Pasdaran without being able to contact her loved ones to tell them where she was going.

When Israel launched surprise attacks on Iran last June, it targeted mostly military and nuclear sites and carried out strikes in Tehran that assassinated its top military chain of command.

The strikes on Saturday appeared far broader, including political targets such as the Intelligence Ministry, the judiciary and the Pasteur gated compound where the president and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, generally reside, according to residents in the area and local news outlets.

A woman holds an illustration depicting Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei during a rally in support of the government in Tehran on Saturday. AFP

Republicans back Trump, Democrats attack 'illegal' war

WASHINGTON, AFP: Republicans largely welcomed strikes launched Saturday by US forces and ally Israel against Iran, but prominent Democrats condemned what they called an illegal aggression.

"Today, Iran is facing the severe consequences of its evil actions," including "terrorism," the murder of Americans and the regime's sustained nuclear ambitions, Speaker of the House of Representatives Mike Johnson said in a statement.

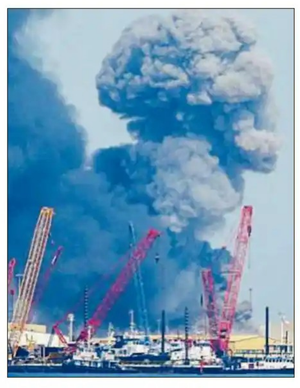
"We pray for the safety of our brave servicemembers and our allies involved in Operation Epic Fury," the top Republican in Congress added. However, the top Democrat in the Senate, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, demanded a briefing to Congress by the Trump administration.

"The American people do not want another endless and costly war in the Middle East when there are so many problems at home," he said.

For Senator Lindsey Graham, a longtime supporter of US military intervention against Iran, Donald Trump's speech "will go down in history as the catalyst for the most historic change in the Middle East in a thousand years."

"It will be violent, extensive and I believe, at the end of the day, successful," he added in a series of X posts.

Israeli officials arrive at a site where debris from an Iranian rocket fell on the outskirts of Tel Aviv on Saturday. AFP



Smoke rises in the sky after Iranian missile hit the port of Manama in Bahrain on Saturday. REUTERS

Explosion rocks Dubai landmark The Palm

DUBAI, AFP: Two witnesses told AFP they heard an explosion and saw a plume of smoke rising from Dubai's famed man-made island The Palm as authorities reported four injured.

The attack came as Iran carried out retaliatory strikes in the oil-rich Gulf following US and Israeli attacks -- rattling a region long seen as a haven of peace and security.

One of the witnesses said he saw thick black smoke rising from a hotel on the Palm and heard ambulances rushing towards the scene.

The Dubai media office later confirmed an "incident" in a building in the Palm Jumeirah area that resulted in a fire and four people injured.

"Dubai Civil Defence has confirmed that the resulting fire is now under control. Four individuals sustained injuries and have been transferred to medical facilities," it added.

The incident targeting a Dubai landmark shocked residents, and was followed by several bangs heard by Dubai residents and AFP correspondents in the city.

World leaders react cautiously

BRUSSELS, AP/PTI

World leaders reacted warily to US and Israeli strikes on Iran on Saturday that triggered concerns of a broader conflict.

European leaders held emergency meetings and took measures to protect their citizens in the Middle East, with key leaders calling for a negotiated settlement between Iran and the US. Australia and Canada were more open in their support for the strikes, while Russia and China responded with criticism.

Britain, France and Germany called for a resumption of negotiations and condemned Iranian attacks on countries in the region. They did not directly comment on the strikes.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said in a statement their countries did not take part in the strikes. The three countries have led efforts to reach a negotiated solution over Iran's nuclear programme. "We condemn Iranian attacks on countries in the region in the strongest terms. Iran must refrain from indiscriminate military strikes. We call for a resumption of negotiations and urge the Iranian leadership to seek a negotiated solution. Ultimately, the Iranian people must be allowed to determine their future," they said.

Russia's Foreign Ministry called the strikes "a preplanned and unprovoked act of armed aggression against a sovereign and independent UN member state".

China said it was "highly concerned" about the US and Israeli strikes on Iran and called for an immediate halt to the military action and a return to negotiations. "Iran's sovereignty, security and territorial integrity should be respected," Chinese Foreign Ministry said.

KEIR STARMER
UK Prime Minister

"They (Iran) must never be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon.

Iran requests emergency IAEA meeting over 'wrongful acts'

VIENNA, AFP: Iran called Saturday for an emergency meeting of the UN nuclear watchdog to discuss "baseless" US and Israeli claims that Tehran's atomic programme partly justified their military action against it.

"In light of ongoing acts of aggression by the US and Israeli regimes... (Iran) called for an urgent extraordinary meeting" of the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors, Iran's mission to the Vienna-based agency said on X.

The post included an image of its formal request letter, addressed to IAEA chief Rafael Grossi.

"Baseless claims, vicious threats and wrongful acts of aggressors against Iran's peaceful nuclear program shall be addressed by the Board immediately," it added.

Grossi took part in the US-Iranian talks on February 17 and 26, which some observers saw as the last chances to avoid a conflict.

The UN nuclear watchdog stressed on Friday the "utmost urgency" of its request to verify all nuclear material in Iran, according to a confidential report seen by AFP.

Trump told Iran strike 'high-risk, high-reward'

WASHINGTON, REUTERS: Ahead of the US attack on Iran, President Donald Trump received briefings that not only delivered blunt assessments about the risk of major US casualties but also touted the prospect of a geopolitical shift in the Middle East in favour of US interests, a US official told Reuters.

The launch of what the Pentagon called Operation Epic Fury on Saturday plunged the Middle East into a new and unpredictable conflict. The US and Israeli militaries struck sites across Iran, triggering retaliatory Iranian attacks against Israel and nearby Gulf Arab countries.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the briefers described the operation to the president as a high-risk, high-reward scenario that could present a once-in-a-generation opportunity for change in the region.

Trump himself appeared to echo that sentiment when he acknowledged the stakes at the onset of the operation, saying "the lives of courageous American heroes may be lost".

"But we're doing this not for now, we're doing this for the future, and it is a noble mission," Trump said in a video address announcing the start of major combat operations.

"For 47 years, the Iranian regime has chanted death to America and waged an unending campaign of bloodshed and mass murder ... We're not going to put up with it any longer."

The briefings from Trump's national security team help explain how the president decided to pursue arguably the riskiest US military operation since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Bolivian plane carrying banknotes crashes, 15 dead

LA PAZ (BOLIVIA), AP/PTI

A cargo plane carrying money crashed on Friday near Bolivia's capital, damaging about a dozen vehicles on a highway, scattering banknotes on the ground and leaving at least 15 people dead and others injured, an official said.

Defence Minister Marcelo Salinas said the Hercules C-130 plane was transporting newly printed Bolivian currency when it "landed but veered off the runway" at an airport in El Alto, a city adjacent to the capital, La Paz, before ending up in a nearby field. Firefighters managed to put out the flames that engulfed the aircraft. Fire chief Pavel Tovar said at least 15 people died but he did not clarify if the dead were in the plane or in the cars on the nearby highway.

Salinas did not specify how many people had been killed in the crash and said the cause was being investigated. Bolivian Air Force General Sergio Lora said two of the plane's six crew members had not been found as of late Friday, adding that the aircraft was arriving from the eastern city of Santa Cruz.

Images on social media showed debris from the aircraft, destroyed cars and bodies scattered on the road. According to Tovar, at least 15 vehicles were damaged. The plane, belonging to the Bolivian air force, was transporting money to La Paz and images on social media showed people rushing to collect the bills scattered at the crash site, while police in riot gear tried to disperse them.Tovar said the hundreds of people trying to collect the spilled bills were hindering rescue efforts.

Rescue teams work at the site of the crash of the Bolivian Air Force plane in El Alto, near La Paz, on Friday. AFP

Indian professor resigns over 'racist' comment on South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, PTI: An Indian professor on Friday resigned as head of the Sociology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand in the wake of a controversy about remarks made by her which were considered to be "racist".

The university is now reportedly also considering suspending Professor Srila Roy as a disciplinary process gets underway. The controversy was sparked by a social media post by Roy on February 21 that read: "South Africans have little ambition, are complacent and have a poor ethic."

She was reacting to a discussion on social media about foreign nationals at South African universities after the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education expressed concern about the presence of 7.7 per cent foreign nationals at these universities.

352 Afghan Taliban personnel killed: Pak

Islamabad reports heavy losses on Taliban side amid mediation efforts

ISLAMABAD, PTI

Pakistani security forces have killed 352 Taliban personnel and allied terrorist groups in ongoing air and ground attacks, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday.

The minister said Pakistani forces completely destroyed 130 military posts and captured another 26 border posts.

Providing an update at 9 pm (local time) on Taliban losses, Tarar said 352 personnel had been killed so far and another 535 injured.

Tarar also said 171 tanks and armoured vehicles had been destroyed, adding that Pakistan also hit 41 locations "with precision air strikes".

Pakistan launched a massive retaliatory attack, code-named Operation Ghazab lil Haq, after the Afghan side simultaneously attacked 53 locations along the more than 2,600 km long border. Addressing a press conference on Friday evening, army spokesperson Lt Gen Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry said the Afghan Taliban should choose between Pakistan and terrorist organisations.

"I want to make one thing clear: the oppressive Afghan Taliban regime has to make a clear choice. The choice is between Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, Baloch Liberation Army, Daesh, Al Qaeda, the terrorists and terrorist organisations, and Pakistan," he said.

"They have to make this choice. It has been made clear by the government of Pakistan. It is not something new I am saying. They have to make this choice — whether they choose terrorists and terrorism or Pakistan. We are clear. Let it be known that our choice is absolutely clear. It will always be Pakistan over everything."

Pakistan has long accused the Afghan Taliban of allowing the TTP and other terrorist groups to use their soil for residence, training and logistics to carry out attacks against Pakistan.

The Afghan side rejects the allegations and asked Pakistan to put its own house in order by holding talks with the militants.

Meanwhile, a senior US official supported Pakistan's right to defend against terrorists.

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Allison Hooker said she spoke to Pakistan's foreign secretary to "express condolences for lives lost in the recent conflict between Pakistan and the Taliban".

Second armed boat attack mission from US failed: Cuba

HAVANA, AP/PTI: Cuba's Ministry of the Interior unveiled for the first time late Friday items they aboard a Florida-flagged speedboat that opened fire on troops in waters off the island's north coast this week, with soldiers responding and killing four.

Officials also revealed that authorities were able to establish that the 10 Cuban suspects left the US in two boats, but one failed, so they transferred all the supplies to the remaining vessel and left the other adrift.

The government said the detained suspects revealed those details and stressed that they immediately contacted the US Coast Guard.

Among the items were a dozen high-powered weapons, a large cooler filled with over 12,800 rounds of ammunition; 11 pistols; heavy-duty boots; helmets with cameras; and camouflage backpacks.

THE WINNER TAKES IT ALL

India-West Indies clash in a virtual Super Eights knockout

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

Having finally hit their stride after a series of scratchy displays, the Indians will be looking to flex their batting muscle against an equally power-packed West Indies when the two sides lock horns in a blockbuster winner-takes-it-all battle here on Sunday.

Hammered by a dominant South Africa in their opening Super Eights Group 1 game of the ICC T20 World Cup last Sunday, an under-pressure India came roaring back to life against Zimbabwe on Thursday, where they checked all the batting problems that were weighing them down.

Electrifying opener Abhishek Sharma, who had gotten out for three successive ducks, rediscovered his mojo with a matured half-century. The middle-order played the fearless cricket that was conspicuous by its absence in the marquee event, while the returning Sanju Samson and an iffy Tilak Varma too found their destructive touch as the pieces of the batting jigsaw finally fell for India in Chepauk.

It's that fire the defending champions will be looking to unleash on the dangerous West Indies at the Eden Gardens — a fortress where India haven't lost a T20I to the Caribbeans in four attempts and won seven out of eight matches overall, but a ground where the Calypso Kings clinched the T20 World Cup for the second time in 2016 in one of the most sensational climaxes ever when Carlos Brathwaite smashed England's Ben Stokes for four successive sixes in the final over with his team needing 19.

A key ingredient in India's win over Zimbabwe was the tactical rejigging they did to break the monotony in their left-loaded batting line-up, and in all probability, the Men In Blue will continue with the same playing XI against the West Indies as well. Sanju Samson was picked to partner Abhishek at the top, and the right-hander blended in brilliantly, teeing off confidently from ball one that had a trickle-down effect on the rest of his colleagues, especially Abhishek.

The only worry for India, which could be a big factor considering the batting firepower of the West Indies, is their ace spinner Varun Chakravarthy suddenly being taken to the cleaners. He lived up to his status as the No. 1 T20 bowler in the world, picking up 9 wickets and conceding just 4.95 runs an over in the four group-stage affairs. But in the two Super Eights games, he's given away 47 and 35 runs respectively, but picking up just a wicket apiece.

Chakravarthy couldn't have hoped for a better place to turn the tide. Kolkata Knight Riders have been his home since 2020 and he knows Eden Gardens like the back of his hand; the 34-year-old a key figure in the franchise's IPL triumph in 2024 with 21 wickets.

How well Chakravarthy bowls could be a determining factor.

The West Indies, who looked like the typical powerful T20 machine in the group phase before being picked apart by South Africa in their last match, will be banking on their batting depth to knock India out of their home party like they did in 2016. Then West Indies defeated India in the semifinals in Mumbai and this clash is a knockout too with the winner setting up a last-four match versus Group 2 toppers England at Wankhede on March 5.

Shimron Hetmyer has led the batting fireworks with 221 runs, while Sherfane Rutherford (169), Shai Hope (185) have contributed nicely, with Rovman Powell (115), Jason Holder (104), Brandon King (92) and Romario Shepherd (80) putting their hands up nicely at various stages.

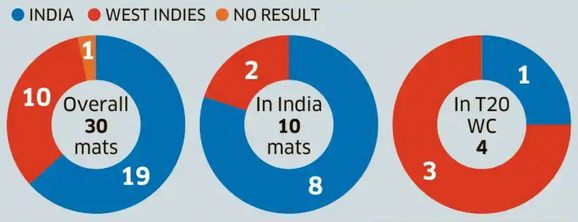
The West Indies have played twice at Eden Gardens this World Cup, but both of those were day games. In fact, this will be the first night game of this event, and it could be a cracker.

Squads: India: Suryakumar Yadav (capt), Abhishek Sharma, Tilak Varma, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Varun Chakaravarthy, Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel, Washington Sundar, Rinku Singh.

West Indies: Shai Hope (capt), Johnson Charles, Shimron Hetmyer, Brandon King, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Quentin Sampson, Roston Chase, Jason Holder, Romario Shepherd, Matthew Forde, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Gudakesh Motie, Jayden Seales.

India vs West Indies in T20Is

● INDIA ● WEST INDIES ● NO RESULT



India vs West Indies in T20 WC

Year	Venue	Result
2009	Lord's	WI won by 7 wkts
2010	Bridgetown	WI won by 14 runs
2014	Mirpur	Ind won by 7 wkts
2016	Mumbai	WI won by 7 wkts

Record in T20Is at Eden Gardens

India		West Indies
8	Mats	7
7	Won	3
1	Lost	4
87.5%	Win%	42.9%

Captaincy record in T20Is

	SKY*	Shai Hope
Won	39	11
Lost	8	15
NR	2	1
Win%	79.6	40.7

*Suryakumar Yadav

Compiled by Arun Gopalakrishnan

Captain Suryakumar Yadav inspects the pitch during India's practice session, ahead of their final Super Eights match against West Indies, in Kolkata, on Saturday. PTI

SUPER 8s GROUP 1

Teams	P	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
South Africa (Q)	2	2	0	0	4	+2.890
West Indies	2	1	1	0	2	+1.791
India	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**-0.100**
Zimbabwe	2	0	2	0	0	-4.475

Davids will beat Goliaths again: WI coach Sammy

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

At the start of the T20 World Cup, West Indies head coach Daren Sammy proclaimed that for any team to lift the trophy, it had to go through India. Now, after three weeks, his team is left with that onerous task as Windies take on the Men in Blue in a virtual quarterfinal at the Eden Gardens here on Sunday.

Sammy, a much-loved figure in this part of the world, echoed the same thoughts, calling Sunday's Super Eights clash a battle between 'David and Goliath' but confident his 'Davids' will triumph again, like they did in the 2016 T20 World Cup semifinal at the Wankhede Stadium.

"I still think in order for you to win this tournament, you have to go through India at some point. Tomorrow (Sunday) is that day for us, and we're going to play a good game of cricket in order to come out victorious. I'm excited for the contest," said Sammy, who captained West Indies in 2016 when they won the trophy for a second time.

"I'm pretty sure they'll have 80,000 (fans) here tomorrow and then another 1.4 billion supporting India. It will still feel like a David and Goliath showdown, but like I said in 2016, David did defeat Goliath. So that's what I'm going to tell my boys tomorrow."

A key player in the West Indies' remarkable run this World Cup is Shimron Hetmyer. Sammy attributed Hetmyer's changed mental space to his consistency.

Ryan Ten Doeschate. AFP FILE PHOTO

'Taking wickets key against deep batting line-ups'

SIDNEY KIRAN
KOLKATA, DHNS

The Indian bowling attack will have its task cut out when it squares off against a power-packed West Indies that bats deep, almost till No. 9, in the final Super Eights clash here on Sunday. Given what's at stake with the winner advancing to the semifinals and the loser packing their bags, the West Indies are expected to come out all guns blazing.

India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate, who seems to have become a spokesperson for the team with his repeated media interactions, said the Men in Blue are aware of the Caribbean batting firepower but are confident of quelling it.

"I don't think there are many line-ups that can boast Romario Shepherd walking into number nine. But I think that's also a feature of all the teams in the tournament now, certainly that have done well. England bat really deep, New Zealand bat really deep, India bat really deep... So you have to focus on taking wickets," said Doeschate at the pre-match press conference here on Saturday.

"I think that old-school way of just containing in T20 cricket has gone out. We feel the West Indies play a risk-reward game of high proportion in both aspects of that. And as a bowling unit, we're really looking forward to that challenge. We know there are kinks there where we can get wickets, and our plan tomorrow will be to attack for the whole 20 overs and peg them back in that way, much like South Africa did. But yeah, it's certainly going to be a challenge. The surface looks pretty good, so it could be a high-scoring game."

As Doeschate pointed out, India too tends to bat deep and the pieces finally fell together nicely in Chennai against Zimbabwe where they amassed the highest total of this World Cup so far (256/4). Doeschate feels it couldn't have come at a better time.

Rinku to join team

India batter Rinku Singh, who flew to Aligarh on Friday to conduct the last rites of his father Khanchand Singh after he passed away due to liver cancer, is scheduled to join the team on Saturday, reports DHNS from Kolkata. "He's planned to join us later this evening (Saturday) and we just need to get around him and help him through this very difficult time," said India's assistant coach Ryan ten Doeschate.

Pak crash out despite win

Lanka's narrow loss helps New Zealand make the cut for semifinals

PALLEKELE, PTI

Dasun Shanaka's stunning onslaught couldn't avert a narrow five-run defeat for Sri Lanka but knocked Pakistan out of the T20 World Cup, as New Zealand joined table toppers England from Group 2 in the semifinals here on Saturday.

With 28 needed off the final over, the Sri Lankan skipper clobbered Shaheen Shah Afridi (1/48) for three consecutive sixes and a four to bring it down to six from the final ball. But Shanaka left the final delivery alone thinking it would be called a wide, which the on-field umpire did not give.

Shanaka hit a total of eight sixes and two fours to make 76 not out off only 31 balls, as Sri Lanka finished at 206/7 in reply to Pakistan's 212/8, who needed to keep the island nation under 147 to surpass New Zealand (1.390) on net run rate in order to make the final four.

Sahibzada Farhan's (100) second century in the competition and his record 176-run stand - highest for any wicket in T20 World Cup history - with Fakhar Zaman (84) also went in vain as Pakistan were left to rue a late collapse, which saw them lose eight wickets for 36 runs in last four overs.

Pakistan had slipped from 176/0 in the 16th over to 212/8, with Sri Lanka bowlers finally getting their act together.

Pakistan needed to win by at least 64 or more runs to get the better of the Kiwis. But, apart from Abrar Ahmed's superb spell of 4-0-23-3, Pakistan did not have any other bowler stepping up.

Sri Lanka, who were reduced to 101/5 in the 12th over, fought their way back with Pavan Rathnayake's 58 (37 balls; 4x4s, 3x6s) and Shanaka's heroics during a 61-run stand for the sixth wicket.

England, who won each of their three Super Eights games, topped Group 2 while New Zealand qualified as the second team.

It was, nevertheless, a disappointing end for Pakistan opener Farhan who broke Indian superstar Virat Kohli's record of most runs (319) in a single edition of T20 World Cup.

The 29-year-old Farhan finished with a total of 383 runs in seven matches at 76.60 and a strike rate of 160.25, hitting two tons and as many fifties in the process.

Sri Lanka made a meek start on a flat deck as Naseem Shah had opener Pathum Nissanka (3) on a slow ball outside off while the other two in the top order, Kamil Mishara (26) and Charith Asalanka (25), failed to convert their starts.

Abrar was spot on with his accuracy as he hit the stumps thrice against each of the three Sri Lankan southpaws in Mishara, Asalanka and Kamindu Mendis (3).

Earlier, Farhan and Fakhar Zaman put on a record partnership to power Pakistan.

Brief scores: Pakistan: 212/8 in 20 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 100, Fakhar Zaman 84; Dilshan Madushanka 3-33, Dasun Shanaka 2-42) bt Sri Lanka: 207/6 in 20 overs (Kamil Mishara 26, Charith Asalanka 25, Pavan Rathnayake 58, Dasun Shanaka 76 n.o.; Abrar Ahmed 3-23). **Result:** Pakistan won by 5 runs. **PoM:** Sahibzada Farhan.

Sri Lanka's captain Dasun Shanaka sends one over the fence during their Super 8s match against Pakistan in the T20 World Cup in Pallekele on Saturday. AP/PTI

SUPER 8s GROUP 2

Teams	P	W	L	NR	Pts	NRR
England (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	+1.096
New Zealand (Q)	3	1	1	1	3	+1.390
Pakistan	3	1	1	1	3	-0.123
Sri Lanka	3	0	3	0	0	-1.950

Agha to be removed as Pak captain

KARACHI, PTI

Salman Ali Agha is set to be removed as captain of the Pakistan team regardless of the outcome of their campaign in the ongoing T20 World Cup, while some other senior players might have also played their last tournament for the national side.

According to a reliable source in the Pakistan Cricket Board, chairman Mohsin Naqvi is "unhappy" at the way the team's campaign has turned out in the mega event.

"Naqvi is not happy at all because this time he was assured by the selectors, team management and his close aides in the board that the team was set to do well in the World Cup," the source said on Saturday.

He said that Naqvi had made up his mind to sack Salman as the T20 captain and will also have a candid discussion with head coach Mike Hesson and selectors on the future of some players.

"Salman, Babar Azam, Usman Khan and a few others will probably see curtains on their T20 international career after the World Cup," the source said.

The names of Shadab Khan and Shaheen Shah Afridi are being considered to replace Salman as captain.

Salman Ali Agha

He also narrated how Hesson had even before the World Cup told Naqvi that after the event Pakistan needed to bring in and establish some younger players and move ahead with the requirements of modern-day T20 cricket.

"So, after the World Cup, you can expect major changes in the Pakistan T20 set-up," the source said.

Babar, a veteran of 145 T20 internationals, has probably played his last T20 game unless he does something dramatic against Sri Lanka and thereafter in the knockouts if Pakistan manage to qualify.

Zestful Zimbabwe aim to end campaign on a high against South Africa

NEW DELHI, PTI

Zimbabwe will need to fix their bowling woes against a skillful South Africa as they aim to end their spirited T20 World Cup campaign on a high in their final Super 8 fixture here on Sunday.

Reaching the Super 8 as group toppers was part of the success story for Zimbabwe and inspired by their leader Sikandar Raza, they would be determined to push South Africa to the limit.

South Africa are the team to beat in the ICC showpiece and if Zimbabwe are to challenge them, they will have to come up with a better bowling performance after conceding more than 250 runs in the previous two Super 8 games against West Indies and India.

Raza knows they can only compete with the bigger teams if they do well in all three departments.

"At the World Cup against the best teams, you need all your three departments to be working hand in hand. And unfortunately, if one lacks, then the game runs away from you.

"So hopefully in the last game, leave everything on the park and we try and sort out all our three departments and hopefully that gives us the best chance to win the game," Raza had said after the India defeat.

His team has been guilty of bowling too many loose balls in the Super 8 stage.They need to bowl with the discipline they displayed against Australia and Sri Lanka in the group stage.

Their unbeaten run in the group stage came on slow pitches of Sri Lanka but the margin of error drops drastically in batting friendly Indian conditions as they experienced in Mumbai and Chennai.

On the batting front, the opening duo of Brian Bennett and Tadiwanashe Marumani need to maximise the powerplay. Bennett, who is yet to be dismissed in the tournament, showed against India he can also hit sixes. He would need to find a way to clear the stands against a wily South African attack.

Marco Jansen and Lungi Ngidi (11 wickets each) have been the standout bowlers for the Proteas and complemented well by pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada, Corbin Bosch and frontline spinner Keshav Maharaj.

The top-three comprising skipper Aiden Markram, Quinton de Kock and Ryan Rickelton too are at the top of their game and it would take a special bowling effort from Raza and his team to stop them.

Zimbabwe take on South Africa in their final Super 8s fixture in the T20 World Cup in New Delhi on Sunday. REUTERS

LIVE @ 3 PM

Markram best suited as opener: Coach Prince

NEW DELHI, PTI: Aiden Markram's remarkable consistently at the top of the order in the ongoing T20 World Cup has made it clear that the opening slot remains most suited for the South Africa captain, batting coach Ashwell Prince said on Saturday.

From opening to number five, Markram has batted in different positions in his 75-match T20 International career. In the lead-up to the T20 World Cup, Markram moved himself up and down the order in the series against India.

The trend continued in the following SA20 back home with Markram finally being most productive in the opener's role. The right-hander has racked up three 80-plus scores in the ICC showpiece thus far.

"In the past there might have been different opinions about what his best position in the line-up might be. He's played in different positions, not only for us but also in leagues, he's batted in different positions," said Prince ahead of their final Super Eights game against Zimbabwe here on Sunday.

"I've always been of the opinion that opening is his best position."

Will Jacks

This group is the era of Harry Brook: Jacks

COLOMBO, PTI: England's recent surge in the T20 World Cup is the beginning of the "Harry Brook-era", built on a calm and clear mindset rather than perfection, believes all-rounder Will Jacks.

Brook endured a difficult build-up to the T20 World Cup, beginning with a disappointing Ashes and followed by a high-profile drunken altercation with a nightclub bouncer in Wellington casting a shadow over his leadership.

But he has responded with a 100 against Pakistan to seal England's semifinal berth with a match to spare.

Against New Zealand, the already-qualified side showed no drop in intensity, recovering from 117/6 in 17 overs to chase down 160, with Jacks and Rehan Ahmed finishing the job.

England thus advanced with three wins from three in the Super Eights, their campaign peaking at the right time as they now stand just two victories away from the title after a stuttering start.

On whether it felt like the "Bazball" good times were back, Jacks said: "I think this group is the era of Harry Brook. He is our white-ball captain.

"And I think that is something that we've been really focusing on. He (Brook) has got us to play the certain way, and I think the environment around the group led by him is absolutely brilliant.

Gukesh stunned, Aravindh held

PRAGUE, PTI

World Champion D Gukesh of India suffered a shock defeat to Jorden van Foreest of Holland, while Aravindh Chithambaram played out a draw with Parham Maghsoodloo of Iran in the third round of the Masters section of Prague International chess festival here.

Still looking for his first victory in the tournament, Gukesh never really found his footing against van Foreest, who, playing white, employed the Ruy Lopez and seized the initiative early with the bishop pair in the Tartakower variation.

The women's World cup winner Divya lost with her black pieces against Jiner Zhu of China, while Ganguly found a tough customer in Czech republic's Jachym Nemec.

Results round 3 (only Indians): Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 2) beat D Gukesh (Ind, 1); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 1.5) drew with Parham Maghsoodloo (Iri, 1). **Challengers:** Surya Shekhar Ganguly (Ind, 0.5) lt to Jachym Nemec (Cze, 2); Jiner Zhu (Chn, 1) beat Divya Deshmukh (Ind, 1).

Karnataka's Dean-Gagan storm into lead in Rally of Maharashtra

BENGALURU, DHNS: Mangaluru's speed maestro Dean Mascarenhas, along with co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah of TSI Racing, produced a scintillating performance to take the overnight lead in the Blueband Rally of Maharashtra, the sixth and final round of the FMSCI Blueband Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) 2025 in Nashik on Saturday.

The Mangaluru-Kodagu combination, running on MRF Tyres, dominated the day by clocking the fastest times in five of the six Special Stages. Their consistent pace enabled them to open up a healthy advantage going into the final leg on Sunday.

Defending National champion Karna Kadur, assisted by seasoned co-driver Musa Sherif, lost over a minute during the day's stages and slipped to second place overall, with three Special Stages remaining to be run on Sunday.

Provisional final results: Overall: Dean Mascarenhas (Mangaluru)/ Gagan Karumbaiah (Kodagu) (TSI Racing) (54 minutes, 15.6seconds), 1; Karna Kadur (Bengaluru)/ Musa Sherif (Kasargod), Arka Motorsports (00:55:48.0), 2; Philippos Matthai (Delhi)/ Harish KN (Bengaluru) (Arka Motorsports) (00:56:59.5), 3. **INRC1:** Dean Mascarenhas/ Gagan Karumbaiah (00:54:15.6), 1; Karna Kadur/ Musa Sherif (00:55.48.0), 2. **INRC2:** Philippos Matthai (Delhi)/ Harish KN (Bengaluru) (Arka Motorsports) (00:56:59.5), 1; Daraius Shroff (Mumbai)/ Arjun Dheerendra (Bengaluru) (Chettinad Sporting) (00:57:42.6), 2; Pragathi Gowda /Chandramouli (Bengaluru) (Chettinad Sporting) (00:57:46.3), 3.

Dean Mascarenhas, along with co-driver Gagan Karumbaiah, in action.

MYSORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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E-Auction Notification of Corner, Intermediate, Premium Sites in prominent locations Developed by Mysore Development Authority

No.MDA/E-AN/02/2025-26 / 27.02.2026

1) E-Auction Commencement Date: 11.03.2026 after 6.00 PM Indian Standard Time 2) Last date for expressing interest to participate in the e-auction for serial numbers 1 to 50 : 23.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM Indian Standard Time And the date of commencement of direct bidding for e-auction is 26.03.2026 at 11.00 AM Indian Standard Time and the date of Closing direct bidding is 27.03.2026 upto 4:00 PM Indian Standard Time (Delta Time 5:00 minutes) 3) Last date for expressing interest to participate in the e-auction for serial numbers 51 to 100 : 23.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM Indian Standard Time And the date of commencement of direct bidding for e-auction is 30.03.2026 at 11.00 AM Indian Standard Time and the date of Closing direct bidding is 01.04.2026 upto 4:00 PM Indian Standard Time (Delta Time 5:00 minutes) 4) Last date for expressing interest to participate in the e-auction for serial numbers 101 to 150 : 23.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM Indian Standard Time And the date of commencement of direct bidding for e-auction is 02.04.2026 at 11.00 AM Indian Standard Time and the date of Closing direct bidding is 04.04.2026 upto 4:00 PM Indian Standard Time (Delta Time 5:00 minutes). 5) Last date for expressing interest to participate in the e-auction for serial numbers 151 to 200 : 23.03.2026 up to 5.00 PM Indian Standard Time And the date of commencement of direct bidding for e-auction is 06.04.2026 at 11.00 AM Indian Standard Time and the date of Closing direct bidding is 07.04.2026 upto 4:00 PM Indian Standard Time (Delta Time 5:00 minutes).

Sl. No.	Layout Name	Site No.	Inter./ Corner	Road Facing/ In Mtr.	Measurement (In mtrs) N-S	Measurement (In mtrs) E-W	Area in Sq mtrs	Value of Sq. mtrs	Site Value (Rs. In Lakhs)
Corner and Intermediate sites									
1	Nachanahalli-Kuppaluru 3rd Stage 'D' Block	99	Corner	West 9.00	13.00	18.00	234.00	79256.00	185.46
2	JP Nagara 1st Stage 'F' Block	72	Corner	E-N 9.00	24.00	(18.00+19.00)/2	444.00	79256.00	351.90
3	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	754	Corner	12-9 E-N	11.20	18.00	201.06	64986.00	131.02
4	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1025/B	Intermediate	East 9.00	6.00	9.00	54.00	58003.00	31.32
5	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1050/B	Intermediate	West 9.00	6.00	9.00	54.00	58003.00	31.32
6	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1229	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	58003.00	62.64
7	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1615	Corner	18-9 N-E	12.00	9.00	108.00	64986.00	70.18
8	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1616	Corner	9.00 E-S	12.00	9.00	108.00	64986.00	70.18
9	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1631	Corner	12-9 E-N	12.00	8.50	102.00	64986.00	66.29
10	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1631/F	Corner	9.00 N-W	12.00	(13.00+14.60)/2	165.60	64986.00	107.62
11	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1632	Corner	12-9 E-S	12.00	8.50	102.00	64986.00	66.29
12	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1632/A	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	58003.00	62.64
13	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1632/F	Corner	9.00 W-S	12.00	(11.00+13.00)/2	144.00	64986.00	93.58
14	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1638/A	Intermediate	North 9.00	9.00	6.00	54.00	58003.00	31.32
15	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1638/C	Corner	9.00 N-W	9.00	(9.50+7.80)/2	77.85	64986.00	50.59
16	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1644	Corner	12-9 E-N	9.00	(5.40+6.00)/2	51.30	64986.00	33.34
17	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1645	Corner	12-9 E-S	9.00	5.40	48.60	64986.00	31.58
18	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1651/D	Corner	9.00 W-S	9.00	(7.80+6.00)/2	62.10	64986.00	40.36
19	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1660	Corner	9.00 W-S	(8.50+8.20)/2	12.00	100.20	64986.00	65.12
20	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1660/A	Intermediate	West 9.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	58003.00	62.64
21	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1670	Corner	18-12 N-W	9.00	12.00	108.00	64986.00	70.18
22	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	1671	Corner	18-12 N-E	9.00	12.00	108.00	64986.00	70.18
23	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2929	Corner	9-12 N-W	9.00	5.90	53.10	64986.00	34.51
24	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	E-141/A	Intermediate	North 9.00	(0+8.98)/2	37.00	166.13	58003.00	96.36
25	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2930	Corner	12.00 S-W	9.00	5.90	53.10	64986.00	34.51
26	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2956	Corner	12.00 S-E	(5.00+6.20)/2	9.00	50.40	64986.00	32.75
27	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2957	Corner	12-9 S-W	(7.00+6.20)/2	9.00	59.40	64986.00	38.60
28	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2963	Intermediate	West 9.00	6.00	9.00	54.00	58003.00	31.32
29	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2969	Corner	9.00 N-W	6.00	9.00	54.00	64986.00	35.09
30	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	3098	Intermediate	South 12.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	58003.00	125.29
31	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	4499	Intermediate	North 24.00	24.00	15.00	360.00	58003.00	208.81
32	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	4501	Corner	24-12 N-E	24.00	(15.50+17.50)/2	396.00	64986.00	257.34
33	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	4553	Corner	12-12 S-E	12.00	11.80	141.60	64986.00	92.02
34	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	4516	Corner	12-12 S-E	18.00	(16.00+17.00)/2	297.00	64986.00	193.01
35	Dattagalli 3rd Stage	2944	Corner	12-9 N-E	6.80	9.00	61.20	64986.00	39.77
36	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	1756	Corner	N-E 9.00	24.00	16.15	387.60	86009.00	333.37
37	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	1766	Corner	N-E 9.00	24.00	(16.50+16.00)/2	390.00	86009.00	335.44
38	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	2847	Corner	E-S 9.00	12.00	10.40	124.80	86009.00	107.34
39	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	4776	Corner	9-12 N-W	9.00	(3.90+3.96)/2	35.37	86009.00	30.42
40	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	6128	Corner	N-E 9.00	24.00	12.20	292.80	86009.00	251.83
41	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	7030	Corner	N-E 9.00	4.60	18.00	82.80	86009.00	71.22
42	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	7281	Corner	S-E 9.00	8.40	12.00	100.80	86009.00	86.70
43	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	7326	Corner	S-W 9.00	8.80	12.00	105.60	86009.00	90.83
44	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9004	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
45	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9005	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
46	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9006	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
47	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9007	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
48	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9008	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
49	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9009	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
50	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9010	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
51	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9011	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
52	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9013	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
53	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9016	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
54	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9028	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
55	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9029	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
56	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9030	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
57	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9031	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
58	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9032	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
59	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9033	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
60	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9034	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
61	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9035	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
62	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9036	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
63	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9037	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
64	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9038	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
65	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9063	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
66	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9064	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
67	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9065	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
68	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9067	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
69	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9068	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
70	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9069	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
71	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9070	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
72	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9071	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
73	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9072	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
74	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9073	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
75	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9074	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
76	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9075	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
77	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9076	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59275.00	64.02
78	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9089	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
79	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9090	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
80	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9091	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
81	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9092	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
82	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	9093	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
83	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11160	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
84	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11161	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
85	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11162	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
86	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11162/B	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
87	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11162/A	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
88	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11165	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
89	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11166	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
90	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11167	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
91	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11168	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
92	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11169	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
93	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11170	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
94	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11171	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
95	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11172	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
96	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11173	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
97	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11174	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
98	Vijayanagara 4th Stage 2nd Phase	11232	Intermediate	East 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59275.00	128.03
99	Hebbal 2nd Stage	60/A	Intermediate	South 8.0 mtr	10.00	5.50	55.00	64472.00	35.46
100	Hebbal 2nd Stage	60/B	Intermediate	South 8.0 mtr	10.00	5.50	55.00	64472.00	35.46
101	Hebbal 2nd Stage	658	Intermediate	East 9.0 mtr	6.00	9.00	54.00	64472.00	34.81
102	Hebbal 2nd Stage	1017/A	Intermediate	West 7.0 mtr	6.00	9.00	54.00	64472.00	34.81
103	Hebbal 2nd Stage	2598	Corner	West 9.00	6.00	9.00	54.00	64489.00	34.82
104	Hebbal 1st Stage	1190/I	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	73539.00	158.84
105	Hebbal 1st Stage	1190/H	Intermediate	South 9.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	73539.00	158.84
106	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	2784	Corner	N-W 9.00	(0.5+11.00)/2	18.00	103.50	99318.00	102.79
107	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	2993	Corner	South & East 9.00	14.00	(9+12)/2	147.00	99318.00	146.00
108	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4039	Corner	West & South 9.0 & 6.0	(8+5.50)/2	12.00	81.00	99318.00	80.45
109	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4245	Corner	North & East 9.0 & 6.0	9.00	5.00	45.00	99318.00	44.69
110	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4280	Corner	South & East 9.0 & 6.0	9.00	(4.5+5.0)/2	42.75	99318.00	42.46
111	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4321	Corner	North & East 9.0 & 6.0	9.00	6.00	54.00	99318.00	53.63
112	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4360	Corner	South & East 9.0 & 6.0	9.00	7.20	64.80	99318.00	64.36
113	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4624	Corner	North & West 18.0 & 6.0	13.00	(18+16.5)/2	224.25	99318.00	222.72
114	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4739	Corner	South & East 9.0 & 9.0	8.50	9.00	76.50	99318.00	75.98
115	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4774	Corner	South & West 9.0 & 18.0	(15+12)/2	18.00	243.00	99318.00	241.34

Continued....

CONCERNING TIMES Crushing defeats in the FIH Pro League have exposed India's frailty against non-Asian powerhouses

Amateur display in a pro league

HITA PRAKASH
BENGALURU, DHNS

In a season with World Cup & Asian Games, the Craig Fulton-coached India have a lot to ponder over.

It felt like witnessing a multiple-organ failure. Part by part, the Indian men's hockey team unravelled until they broke into pieces at the FIH Pro League - a tournament that is turning out to be an unmanageable ordeal for the national side.

With a lone third-place finish in the 2021-2022 season being their best result, Indian men's record in the nine-team Pro League has never been great. But their worst performance at the event coming last year, when the Craig Fulton-coached side ended a disappointing eighth despite a promising start, had many believe that the team had learnt their lessons and would come out with renewed energy to prove a point in the tournament's seventh edition this year.

Instead, an opening match defeat was followed by a disastrous outing. Soon, the fortunes spiralled into a losing streak before India finished off with a razor-thin margin shootout victory. It was just enough oxygen just in time to keep them breathing. In short, eight matches with five losses, zero outright victories and three draws (two defeats and one win in shootouts) gave India four points and placed them hanging at the bottom in the eighth spot, one above Pakistan at the halfway mark.

The scorelines, especially the 0-8 drubbing against Argentina in the second game, and the cumulative numbers in eight games: nine goals scored (least among nine teams so far) as opposed to 25 goals conceded and 21 penalty corners earned versus 67 conceded, have rung alarm bells.

Head coach Fulton, however, continues to insist on not panicking. The 51-year-old South African, while agreeing that the four straight defeats at home in Rourkela against Belgium and Argentina did not paint a good picture, also maintained that the squad is going through a phase of experimenting wherein younger legs are being tried to blend with senior guard, keeping in mind the long term goals. To be fair, signs of improvement were evident in the Hobart leg against hosts Australia and Spain.

But for a team aiming to thrive, how sustainable is it to be in a prolonged survival mode? Especially during a year with the World Cup and Asian Games scheduled less than 30 days apart in August-September in two different continents.

"Lack of killer instinct," rues Vasudevan Baskaran, captain of the gold medal-winning Indian side at the 1980 Moscow Olympics and a former coach. "Elementary mistakes which should not have happened," observes Sandeep Somesh, former international and coach.

"Most of the Indian boys looked only 30 to 35 percent fit. Professionalism from each player was missing. There was a little more than a 10-day gap between Hockey India League and Pro League. Okay. But look at players like Tom Boon and Alexander Hendrickx... They played both events, top-scorers in HIL as well as for Belgium now and both aged 30 and above.

"We cannot blame Fulton all the time. What will a coach do if the good players are not performing well," asks the 75-year-old Baskaran.

For a team that emphasises on defensive structure and call it its strength, Somesh felt it was this area in which the Indian side crumbled the most.

"So, we take pride in the way we play as a back defence. And creating chances upfront and catching the opponent on the break is our style of play. However, when you say structure and defence, how often have they been able to maintain the zone they want to take? How often have they been able to channelise the team into the zone they want to steal the ball from? These things are not happening," says Somesh, who was seated in the commentary box during the Pro League.

Out of all the statistics from the first eight games, one in particular sums up the struggles of the Indian team more than the rest - the circle penetrations. Match 1: vs Belgium 13:29; match 2: vs Argentina 14:28; match 3: vs Belgium 9:25; match 4: vs Argentina 12:18; match 5: vs Spain 9:23; match 6: vs Australia 14:25; match 7: vs Spain 16:23; match 8: vs Australia 15:25.

"Circle penetration did not happen for India because our structure is only one forward up. With a defensive structure you cannot expect goals from the boys. When the midfield started going up, we started getting early goals against Australia and Spain. Also, in the forward line, there is no under-pressure attack with communication," points Baskaran.

"Transitioning from defence to attack wasn't up to the mark. The work rate of the forwards is not as good as it needs to be. Unless you have the high quantity of running, you will not be able to create the space and gaps for your midfield to deliver the ball to the forwards, you will not have the circumventing ability," explains Somesh.

Physical fatigue, negative effects of over experimentation, final quarter blunders, younger players not of world standards, experienced guard wearing out, a disconnect between defence, midfield and forward lines, individual flashes of brilliance but a structure lacking innovation and finesse making them predictable...

In spite of all of the above issues, Baskaran and Somesh – similar to every Indian hockey hopeful – refuse to stop believing and trust that there is the light at the end of the tunnel.

"By the next leg of Pro League mid this year (in England and Netherlands), things should settle down. The good thing is there are about 8-9 players who look solid individually. Good rest and better planning to get them to play as a unit should put us in a better place by the time the World Cup and Asian Games come by," sums-up Baskaran.

"Being an Indian fan, the expectation is always high. Now, let us be fair to Fulton. The challenge of peaking in two back-to-back tournaments is very big," cautions Somesh.

To be a follower of the Indian hockey team is not for the faint-hearted. It never has been. Staring at the country's stick-wielding men and their supporters, in the season ahead, are demanding tournaments where every ounce of their fitness, character and knowledge will be tested to the limit. So for those still in it, fasten your seat belts and brace yourselves for what is sure to be a bumpy ride. Because, despite several malfunctioning organs, the heart keeps beating.

India at Pro League Leg-1

Match 1:	Lost 1-3 vs Belgium
Match 2:	Lost 0-8 vs Argentina
Match 3:	Lost 2-4 vs Belgium
Match 4:	Lost 2-4 vs Argentina
Match 5:	Lost 0-2 vs Spain
Match 6:	Drew 2-2 vs Australia (lost shootout 4-5)
Match 7:	Drew 1-1 vs Spain (lost shootout 3-4)
Match 8:	Drew 1-1 vs Australia (won shootout 3-1)

Sl. No.	Layout Name	Site No.	Inter./ Corner	Road Facing/ In Mtr.	Measurement (In mtrs) N-S	Measurement (In mtrs) E-W	Area in Sq mtrs	Value of Sq. mtrs	Site Value (Rs. In Lakhs)
116	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	5100	Corner	South & West 9.0 & 6.0	9.00	(4.50+4.0)/2	38.25	99318.00	37.99
117	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	5715	Corner	West & South 9.0 & 9.0	(8.50+2.00)/2	18.40	96.60	99318.00	95.94
118	Vijayanagara 2nd Stage	4795	Corner	South & West 9.0 & 9.0	(9.5+8.5)/2	12.00	108.00	99318.00	107.26
119	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2014	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
120	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2167	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
121	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2168	Intermediate	North 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
122	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/D	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
123	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/E	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
124	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/F	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
125	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/G	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
126	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/H	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
127	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/I	Intermediate	South9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
128	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/J	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
129	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2280/K	Intermediate	South 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
130	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2233	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
131	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2230	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
132	Devanur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase	2231	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	45420.00	98.11
133	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	01	Corner	N:9.00 E:9.00	9.00	11.70	105.30	59180.00	62.32
134	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	12	Corner	S:12.00 E:9.00	6.60	11.50	75.90	59180.00	44.92
135	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	24	Corner	N:9.00 W:9.00	9.50	11.70	111.15	59180.00	65.78
136	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	79	Corner	S:12.00 W:9.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
137	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	90	Corner	N: 9.00 W:9.00	10.00	11.00	110.00	59180.00	65.10
138	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	100	Corner	S:12.00 W:12.00	12.20	18.00	219.60	59180.00	129.96
139	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	133	Corner	N:12.00 E: 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
140	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	144	Corner	S:12.00 E:9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
141	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	121	Corner	S:12.00 W:9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
142	Shanthaveri Gopal Gowda	120	Corner	S:12.00 E:9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
143	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	280	Corner	S:9.00 W:12.00	13.00	18.00	234.00	59180.00	138.48
144	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	300	Corner	N:12.00 E:9.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
145	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	318	Corner	N:12.00 W:12.00	12.00	6.00	72.00	59180.00	42.61
146	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	338	Corner	N:12.00 E: 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
147	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	363	Corner	S:9.00 W:12.00	12.00	13.70	164.40	59180.00	97.29
148	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	485	Corner	S:9.00 W:12.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
149	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	653	Corner	S:9.00 W:9.00	13.00	12.00	156.00	59180.00	92.32
150	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	668	Corner	N:9.00 W:9.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
151	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	863	Corner	N:9.00 W:12.00	18.00	12.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
152	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	923	Corner	N:18.00 W:12.00	24.00	15.00	360.00	59180.00	213.05
153	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	1313	Corner	N:9.00 E:9.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
154	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	1314	Corner	N:9.00 W:12.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
155	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	1322	Corner	N:12.00 W:12.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
156	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	1343	Corner	N:12.00 W:12.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
157	Lal Bahadur Shastri Nagar	1415	Corner	SN:9.00 E:12.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	59180.00	127.83
158	Lalithadrinagar (South)	721	Corner	North: 18.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
159	Lalithadrinagar (South)	722	Corner	North:18.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	59180.00	63.91
160	Gayathripuram 1st Stage	388	Intermediate	West: 9.00	9.00	14.00	126.00	64560.00	81.35
161	Gayathripuram 1st Stage	373	Intermediate	East: 9.00	12.00	15.00	180.00	64560.00	116.21
162	Gayathripuram 1st Stage	345	Intermediate	West: 9.00	10.00	12.00	120.00	64560.00	77.47
163	Gayathripuram 1st Stage	341	Intermediate	West: 9.00	10.70	12.00	128.4	64560.00	82.90
164	Gayathripuram 1st Stage	314	Intermediate	West: 9.00	12.00	9.00	108.00	64560.00	69.72
165	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4622	Corner	9.00 E-N	(9.00+9.30)/2	(6.60+6.60)/2	60.39	37660.00	22.74
166	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4649	Corner	9.00 W-N	9.00	6.00	54.00	37660.00	20.34
167	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4648	Corner	9.00 S-W	9.00	(6.10+6.30)/2	55.80	37660.00	21.01
168	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4597	Corner	9.00 N-W	9.20	6.10	56.12	37660.00	21.13
169	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4596	Corner	9.00 W-S	9.00	(6.15+6.20)/2	55.57	37660.00	20.93
170	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	4545	Corner	9.00 N	9.00	(6.10+6.15)/2	55.12	37660.00	20.76
171	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	5406	Corner	9.00 E-W	9.00	(6.00+8.50)/2	65.25	37660.00	24.57
172	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	5405	Intermediate	9.00 South	9.00	6.00	54.00	32280.00	17.43
173	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	5404	Intermediate	9.00 South	9.00	6.00	54.00	32280.00	17.43
174	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	5403	Intermediate	9.00 South	9.00	6.00	54.00	32280.00	17.43
175	Sathagalli 2nd Stage	5402	Intermediate	9.00 South	9.00	6.00	54.00	32280.00	17.43
176	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1698	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
177	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1697	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
178	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1696	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
179	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1695	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
180	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1694	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
181	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1693	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
182	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1692	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
183	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1688	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
184	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1689	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
185	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1690	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
186	Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone	1691	Intermediate	9.00 East	15.00	24.00	360.00	48643.00	175.11
187	Vasanth Nagar	651	Intermediate	12.00 E-W	9.00	12.00	108.00	37660.00	40.67
188	Vasanth Nagar	682	Intermediate	12.00 E-W	9.00	12.00	108.00	37660.00	40.67
189	Vasanth Nagar	725	Intermediate	West 12.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	37660.00	40.67
190	Vasanth Nagar	754	Intermediate	West 12.00	9.00	12.00	108.00	37660.00	40.67
191	Vasanth Nagar	09	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	37660.00	81.35
192	Vasanth Nagar	10	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	37660.00	81.35
193	Vasanth Nagar	11	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	37660.00	81.35
194	Vasanth Nagar	12	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	37660.00	81.35
195	Vasanth Nagar	210	Intermediate	West 9.00	12.00	18.00	216.00	37660.00	81.35
196	Vasanth Nagar	1910	Intermediate	East 24.00	15.00	24.00	360.00	37660.00	135.58
197	Vasanth Nagar	1911	Intermediate	East 24.00	15.00	24.00	360.00	37660.00	135.58
198	Vasanth Nagar	1912	Intermediate	East 24.00	15.00	24.00	360.00	37660.00	135.58
199	Vasanth Nagar	1913	Intermediate	East 24.00	15.00	24.00	360.00	37660.00	135.58
200	Vasanth Nagar	1914	Intermediate	East 24.00	15.00	24.00	360.00	37660.00	135.58
								Total (Lakhs)	18629.43

Terms and Conditions of e-auction

1) The Participants of the auction should be a citizen of India. Partnership firm/Limited companies/Trusts registered in Inida may also participate in the e-auction. **2)** E-auction participants need more information they can download the simplified e-auction user guide by logging on to http://www.kppp.karnataka.gov. in available on Citizen Division Home Page. For additional information visit kppp Portal or Contact 080 - 46010000 and 080-68948777 **3)** The Participants should download the Specimen Signature format (Write the Name & Father Name in Kannada & English) and Contact Details format from http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. upload the filled formats. **4)** Those who want to buy the e-auction sites jointly, should also upload the documents jointly in e-auction portal. **5)** Sites will be auctioned on 'as is where is' condition. There is no provision for change of site. **6)** There should be minimum of 2 bidders for the e-auciton Sites. Single bidder will be rejected. **7)** The 5 minutes of delta time shall be extended to the last moment bids of e-auction. For example: If the e-auction Bidding close Time is 16.00 hours, In case any bid submitted in 15.57 hours, the closure time will be extended to another 5 Minutes i.e. 16.02 hours. **8)** EMD payable to participate in e-auction Rs.4.00 Lakhs for sites having the base price Rs.1.00 Crore and Above. Rs.2.00 Lakh for the sites having the base price less than Rs.1.00 Crore and e-Auction processing fees also to be deposited through Debit card/ Credit Card/Net Banking to ICICI bank by e-procurement protal. **9)** The minimum Bid change price is Rs.25,000/- for the sites which is having base price below Rs. 1.00 Crore and Rs.1,00,000/- for the sites which is having base price Rs. 1.00 Crore and above. **10)** The highest bidder should check the site approval status in http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. and shall remit 25% of bid amount from the bidder account only through **RTGS/NEFT (Excluding EMD of Rs. 4,00,000/- or Rs. 2,00,000/-)** before **72 hours** to Account Holder Name: Commissioner MDA Mysore, Bank of Baroda, Account No.89260100004660 (IFSC Code No. BARB0VJMUDA) (Fifth Digit will be Zero). Bidder should submit the 25% amount payment receipt and 2 Passport size photos to Office. If the successful bidder failing to pay the 25% of the bid amount their EMD amount will be forfeited. **11)** Myosre Development Authority has the right to withdraw any auctioned sites at any time. **12)** The auction of said sites will be held according to 1991 Karnataka Development Authorities Act (Disposal of corner and commercial sites) Rule 6(2) the Commissioner Mysore Development Authority, Mysore reserves the right to accept or reject the bid without assigning any reason and prior notice. **13)** The EMD Amount of unsuccessful bidders will be returned to their Bank Account by eproc.karnataka.gov.in of Karnataka after bidding is finalized. **14)** If any difference is found in the Dimension of the sites during the final transfer to the bidder, if the Dimension is less, for less Dimension amount will be refunded. If the Dimension is more, Bidder should has to pay the additional amount for the increased area. If the bidder does not agree, then 25% of the bid amount will be forfeited and the auction will be cancelled. **15)** Bidder should pay the remaining 75% of bid amount from their own Bank account and should submit the receipt copy with Sale Deed request to Office.**16)** The Successful bidder shall pay the balance 75% amount after receiving the Auction Confirmation Letter in 45 days without interest. If who need time extension to pay the 75% amount 18% of interest will be applicable for 90 days and 21% of interest applicable for futher 30 days with the prior permission of the commissioner. **17.** As per Column 194 IA of the Income Tax Act, 1961, In case where the total value of the property auctioned exceeds Rs. 50.00 lakhs, the auction purchaser should be deduct an amount of 1 percent of the total value of the property and liable to pay the same to the Income Tax Department. **18)** In case the longitude and latitude given in the auction announcement is not identified due to manual error, the bidder may confirm the same with the relevant engineers. No refund will be allowed If you request a refund of the amount paid stating that the longitude and latitude are different.

19) CONTACT FOR LOCATION DETAILS: A) Zonal office -1 - 1). Nachanahlli - Kuppaluru 3rd Stage, J.P.Nagara Layout - Smt Roopasri, AE., Mobile: 9740029156 B) Zonal Office-2 - Dattagalli 3rd Stage Layout - Sri Rajashekar G. JE., Mobile : 9880929640, **C)** Zonal Office-3 - Vijayanagara 4th Stage Layout - Sri. K.P. Sathishchandra, AE., Mobile No.9480446452 **D)** Zonal Office - 4 - Hebbal 2nd Satage Layout, Vijayanagara 2nd Stage Layout - Smt. Pavithra R. AE., Mobile No.: 8197542740 **E)** Zonal Office-5B - Devanuur 2nd Stage 2nd Phase - Sri K.P. Sathishchandra. AE., Mobile: 9480446452. **F)** Zonal Office - 6 - Santhaveri Gopalagowdanagara, Lalbahadurshatri Nagar, Lalithadri (South) - Sri Rajashekar G. JE., Mobile No.9880929640 **G)** Zonal Office - 8 - Sathagalli 2nd Stage & Hanchya-Sathagalli 'B' Zone Layout & Vasanthangar Layout- Smt. Meghana, JE., Mobile No.9480884440 **20)** For information regarding Auction may obtain from website: www.mudamysore.gov.in or contact Ph No. 0821-2421629

Sd/- Commissioner

DIPR/DDMYS/02/KSMCA/992/2025-26

CRICKET RANJI TROPHY FINAL

A stirring run culminates in fairytale win

Jammu & Kashmir tame fancied Karnataka to win maiden title 67 years after their debut

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
HUBBALLI, DHNS

A quintet of India international talent in the home camp might have jazzed up the Ranji Trophy final but it was the rival camps' domestic workhorses who shone the brightest at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium here.

On the fifth and final day, Jammu and Kashmir batted and basked in the bright sunshine, etching their names in history books by clinching their first-ever premier National title in 67 years by virtue of first-innings lead in their drawn game against pre-final favourites Karnataka.

When skipper Paras Dogra decided to declare at 342/4 with a lead of 633 runs, signalling the end, both Qamran Iqbal (160 n.o.) and Sahil Lohra (101 n.o.), having registered stress-free hundreds, had their hands wide up in the air while their team-mates came running from the dugout.

Player of the Tournament Auqib Nabi, who picked up 60 wickets, ran towards the striker's end to pluck out a stump while coach Ajay Sharma, with just a few claps, walked in like it was just business as usual.

"It does not feel like we have won it. When I started playing for this side, my dream was to win the Ranji Trophy," Nabi said.

Earlier, the visitors began the final day needing to just bat it out, having established a 477-run lead on the penultimate day.

And they managed to do it with ease on a surface that held firm, as they continued to stonewall an already tired Karnataka attack.

Iqbal had a caught-behind decision overturned while batting on 98, and the cheers grew louder. He eventually notched up his second first-class hundred in 189 balls, after coming in as an injury replacement for the final.

J&K continued to bat and frustrate Karnataka, as the duo brought up their 100-run stand and went into lunch on 285/4.

A disappointed crowd, however, got their bit when Devdutt Padikkal introduced KL Rahul to bowl. The Karnataka opener almost got a wicket but Mayank Agarwal shelled an outside edge off Lotra.

Shreyas Gopal (1/84) then adopted a negative line bowling on leg stump from around the wicket as J&K were in no mood to declare and bowl again. Karnataka, having run out of options, were just going through their motions.

Sahil, another replacement (for Vanshaj Sharma) for the final, registered his first first-class hundred off 233 balls, having already hit 72 in the first innings.

In the end, Karnataka were left disappointed, having lost a final which they came into as favourites and now leave extending their title drought.

There will also be criticism of their batting, which lasted just 93.3 overs in the first innings with their top five consisting of four India internationals against none in the J&K squad.

For all the expectations Karnataka gathered, this is a bruising experience.

Given that their side looked formidable on paper, the batting riches failed to live up to the hype. And with the bowlers not penetrative enough on surfaces without some juice, they had to settle for second.

Jammu & Kashmir players celebrate with the Ranji Trophy after beating Karnataka in the final at KSCA's Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi on Saturday. DH PHOTO/ GOVINDRAJ JAVALI

SCORE BOARD

JAMMU & KASHMIR (I Innings): 584 all out
KARNATAKA (I Innings): 293 all out
JAMMU & KASHMIR (II Innings O/n: 186/4): Qamran Iqbal (not out) 160 (311b, 16x4, 3x6), Yawer Hassan b Prasidh 1 (2b), Shubham Pundir c Shrijith b Vyshak 4 (10b, 1x4), Paras Dogra b Prasidh 16 (59b, 2x4), Abdul Samad c Vyshak b Shreyas 32 (70b, 4x4, 1x6), Sahil Lotra (not out) 101 (228b, 8x4, 3x6). Extras (B-17, W-2, LB-8) 28. **TOTAL (for four wkts, 113 overs) 342**
Fall of wickets: 1-6 (Yawer), 2-11 (Shubham), 3-72 (Dogra), 4-145 (Samad)
Bowling: Vyshak Vijaykumar 10-1-30-1, Prasidh Krishna 12-0-42-2, Vidyadhar Patil 13-0-51-0, Shikhar Shetty 31-10-50-0, Shreyas Gopal 36-13-84-1, Karun Nair 7-2-21-0, KL Rahul 2-0-23-0.
Result: Match drawn and Jammu & Kashmir won the final on first innings lead).
PoM: Shubham Pundir.
PoS: Auqib Nabi.

ACCOLADES POUR IN

"Very proud moment for the team, for the JKCA Association, the J&K people, it has been a long journey. The dream has been realised.
AJAY SHARMA, J&K coach

"It has been a long journey. The association before us tried their best but the game changer happened when BCCI formed the sub-committee in 2021.
MITHUN MANHAS, BCCI president

"It is a very proud moment. Very happy for the players. Even if I am far away, I am wearing my J&K jersey. Very fortunate to have worked with them.
MILAP MEWADA, former J&K coach

"It is a proud moment and a very emotional moment for everyone involved with J&K cricket. We are able to lift the title after 67 years, it is a great moment.
PARVEEZ RASOOL, former India, J&K player

"They didn't need outside talent, because they have plenty in their backyard, what they probably needed was technical expertise, mentorship and the guidance to channelise the hunger they had.
SUNIL JOSHI, former J&K coach

Karnataka didn't step up in the final: Padikkal

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka captain Devdutt Padikkal on Saturday praised Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi for bowling "exceptionally well" throughout the Ranji Trophy season, even as he admitted that his side failed to rise to the occasion in the final of the 91st edition, which concluded here with J&K securing the title on the basis of their first-innings lead after the match ended in a draw on the fifth and final day.

In a largely one-sided summit clash, Jammu and Kashmir capped a remarkable campaign by lifting the Ranji Trophy for the first time in their maiden appearance in the final. Their disciplined performance across five days ensured they stayed ahead of Karnataka, with the crucial first-innings advantage ultimately proving decisive in sealing the historic triumph.

"We always understood the toss will play a big role, but at the end of the day it's a final, you know, the pressures of the final will be there regardless of what you do," Padikkal said after the match. "It was up to us to really step up. Unfortunately, we weren't able to do that and they played much better cricket than us."

Talking about Nabi's performances through the season, Padikkal said, "He has bowled exceptionally well throughout the season." - With inputs from PTI

India A debut to Ranji title - Hubballi is special for skipper Dogra

VIGNESH BHARADWAJ
HUBBALLI, DHNS

Back in 2013, Hubballi was the place where Paras Dogra made his India A debut against West Indies A in an unofficial Test series following his 2012-13 Ranji Trophy campaign for Himachal Pradesh for whom he scored 786 runs.

However, Dogra could not carry the domestic form and managed just seven runs while team-mates Cheteshwar Pujara made 306 and Gautam Gambhir scored 123 in the game.

Almost 13 years on, life came full circle for the 41-year-old on Saturday when the "best moment of his life" came at the same place here at the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium.

"I was talking about it yesterday. I was telling them (J&K team) there were not many buildings. I remember it. Never thought we are going to be champions on this ground. Winning the Ranji Trophy has to be the best moment," Dogra said.

Dogra, playing his first Ranji Trophy final in 25 years, captained J&K to their first national title, 67 years after their first appearance.

"I just can't explain the emotions to be honest. It has been a very long journey. Never thought it would happen. I have always pushed every player and myself to be their best at every time. And it worked, we have won the Ranji Trophy."

J&K skipper Paras Dogra with the Ranji Trophy in Hubballi. DH PHOTO

An emotional and grateful Dogra recalled a time when he wanted to quit but continued pursuing his dream after being pushed by his family.

"A little, yes. Three to four years back, my performances were down. I was thinking of giving up. But my family and friends pushed me. They forced me into thinking I can do it. So I pushed and then Mithun (Manhas) bhai called. And everything just happened."

Coming into the final, a full-strength Karnataka were tipped to win the title but Dogra said that J&K had "no second thoughts" about beating the hosts.

"The mindset was... when you are winning, you are always on the confident side. So that was obvious. In Bombay, we beat Bombay. Baroda in Baroda. We also beat Bengal in Bengal. So these things help. And there were no second thoughts that we can't beat them."

Dogra, who started with Himachal Pradesh in 2001, moved to Pondicherry in 2018 and then shifted to J&K in the 2024-25 season, explained what it took to win one Ranji title.

MOMENTOUS

Scam to summit: Significance of triumph transcends trophy

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

The image of Jammu & Kashmir lifting the Ranji Trophy in Hubballi will endure. But long after the celebrations fade, what may matter more is what that moment represents — for cricket in the region, for governance once mired in scandal and for thousands of youngsters growing up amid conflict who now have a different dream to chase.

At the KSCA Rajnagar Stadium in Hubballi, J&K defeated the formidable Karnataka to script the greatest achievement in their sporting history.

For a side that for decades struggled with administrative chaos, limited infrastructure and fragile systems, this was not merely a title win. It was validation that structure, reform and belief can rewrite destiny.

In a region more frequently defined by violence and political unrest than sporting success, the victory carries symbolic weight. For young boys bowling in narrow lanes in Srinagar, Sopore, Anantnag or Jammu city, cricket is no longer just a recreation — it is a credible pathway. Parents who once viewed the sport as a distraction now see proof that it can be a profession.

That shift did not happen overnight.

For over two decades, the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association was led by Farooq Abdullah, a tenure later clouded by a financial scandal that dented trust and stalled growth. Professional systems were weak, coaching structures were thin and players often rose despite the framework rather than because of it.

J&K players break into a celebratory jig following their Ranji Trophy triumph on Saturday. DH PHOTO

Reforms over the past few years altered that trajectory.

The appointment of former India cricketer Mithun Manhas to oversee cricketing affairs marked a structural reset. In 2022, former Delhi captain Ajay Sharma took over as head coach, instilling discipline and fearlessness. Supported by specialist coaches and led on the field by seasoned batter Paras Dogra, J&K evolved from plucky underdogs into a cohesive unit capable of dominating sessions and absorbing pressure.

Dictated terms

Earlier in the final, their first-innings total of 527 for 6 against Karnataka was a statement of authority. They were not intimidated by pedigree; they dictated terms.

The psychological foundation for this belief was laid years ago. When former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi mentored the side beginning in 2011, he emphasised self-esteem as much as skill. Allrounder Parvez Rasool later proved that a cricketer from J&K could break into the Indian team, while Irfan Pathan's stint as mentor reinforced professionalism and belief.

For a conflict-scarred region, such moments resonate beyond scorecards. They offer a counter-narrative — one of discipline over disruption, ambition over alienation and institutions that work.

The Ranji Trophy in Hubballi is silverware. But for J&K cricket, it is something larger: proof that reform can yield results, that talent can flourish when backed by structure, and that a generation growing up amid uncertainty can find certainty in sport.

Hubballi was the summit. What it represents back home may be even higher.

B'luru to host two ATP events

BENGALURU, DHNS: Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) will be hosting two consecutive ATP Challenger 50 tournaments at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium from May 11-17 and 18-24, the body announced on Saturday.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

T20 WC: Zimbabwe vs South Africa **(3 pm)**, India vs West Indies **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar**.

Women's 3rd ODI: Australia vs India **(9:20 pm)**. **LIVE** on Star

FOOTBALL

EPL: Manchester United vs Crystal Palace, Fulham vs Tottenham Hotspur, Brighton & Hove Albion vs Nottingham Forest **(all 7:30 pm)**, Arsenal vs Chelsea **(10 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar**.

La Liga: Elche vs Espanyol **(6:30 pm)**, Real Betis vs Sevilla **(11 pm)**, Girona vs Celta Vigo **(1:30 am, Monday)**. **LIVE** on **FanCode**.

ISL: Odisha FC vs Chennaiyin FC **(5 pm)**, Mumbai City FC vs North East United FC **(7:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Ten 2, FanCode**.

BADMINTON

German Open: Finals **(4:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Select 2, JioHotstar**.

Liverpool hit five past West Ham, Burnley suffer loss

LIVERPOOL, AFP

Liverpool climbed into the Premier League's top five with a 5-2 win over struggling West Ham on Saturday, as Manchester City aimed to apply more pressure on Arsenal in the title race.

Three first-half goals, all from set-pieces, by Hugo Ekitike, Virgil van Dijk and Alexis Mac Allister put Arne Slot's men on course for a fourth consecutive victory in all competitions.

Dutch duo Cody Gakpo and Jeremie Frimpong added more goals after the break, but despite the scoreline, it was another far from convincing performance from the English champions.

Defeat deals another blow to the Hammers' hopes of survival as they remain two points adrift of safety.

But they hit back twice in the second half through Tomas Soucek and Valentin Castellanos and could have scored more at Anfield.

A place in the top five is almost certain to secure Champions League football next season thanks to the strong results of English sides in European competition this season.

Liverpool's Cody Gakpo celebrates after scoring their fourth goal against West Ham in a 5-2 win at Anfield in Liverpool on Saturday. REUTERS

Liverpool move three points clear of sixth-placed Chelsea, who face the daunting task of a trip to Arsenal on Sunday.

City trail the Gunners by five points at the top of the table, but have a game in hand.

Burnley's slim chances of survival took another body blow in an agonising 4-3 defeat at home to Brentford.

The Bees were cruising to victory and within two points of Chelsea when goals from Mikkel Damsgaard, Igor Thiago and Kevin Schade put them 3-0 up inside 34 minutes at Turf Moor.

Michael Kayode's own goal gave the Clarets hope before half-time and they levelled through Jaidon Anthony and Zian Flemming.

Flemming thought he had completed a remarkable comeback only for a VAR review to rule the goal out for offside.

Results: Liverpool: 5 (Ekitike 5th, Van Dijk 24th, Mac Allister 43rd, Gakpo 70th, Disasi 82nd OG) bt West Ham: 2 (Soucek 49th, Castellanos 75th); Bournemouth: 1 (Evanilson 64th) drew with Sunderland: 1 (Mayenda 18th); Burnley: 3 (Kayode 45+3rd OG, Anthony 47th, Flemming 60th) lt to Brentford: 4 (Damsgaard 9th, 90+3rd, Thiago 25th, Schade 34th); Newcastle: 2 (Ramsey 32nd, Murphy 82nd) lt to Everton: 3 (Branthwaite 19th, Beto 34th, Barry 83rd).

Messi mishap in Puerto Rico pitch invasion

Lionel Messi was knocked to the ground as fans invaded the pitch during chaotic scenes at a match in Puerto Rico on Thursday, reports AFP from Miami.

Messi was playing for Inter Miami in a friendly against Ecuador's Independiente del Valle when supporters raced onto the field in the game's 88th minute.

While one fan demanded a selfie with the Argentine great and another asked for his shirt to be signed, a third rushed to embrace Messi from behind. A security guard tackled the fan, who dragged the World Cup winner to the floor.

Messi did not appear to be injured in the incident, landing on the fan, before picking himself up and walking away in apparent frustration.

It capped a farcical night for a friendly that started an hour late due to a disagreement over which colors each team should wear.

Medvedev lifts Dubai title after injured Griekspoor pulls off

DUBAI, AFP: Daniil Medvedev **(in pic)** claimed his second Dubai title on Saturday following the withdrawal of his opponent Tallon Griekspoor due to a left hamstring injury.

The Russian also said he was unsure if he would be able to play next week's ATP 1000 event in California after UAE airspace was partially closed due to Iranian strikes on the country, following the United States' and Israel's attacks on Iran.

Dutchman Griekspoor picked up the injury towards the end of his opening set of his semi-final win over Andrey Rublev on Friday and looked doubtful for the final when he limped into his post-match press conference.

The tournament announced on Saturday that Griekspoor "was deemed unfit to play in the ATP 500 men's final following a medical assessment".

Cobolli in final

Fifth-seeded Italian Flavio Cobolli out-lasted Miomir Kecmanovic 7-6 (5), 3-6, 6-4 on Friday to book a title clash with Frances Tiafoe in the ATP hardcourt tournament, reports AFP from Acapulco.

Cobolli trailed 1-3 in the final set but won five of the next six games to stay on course for a third ATP title to go with victories on clay court last year.

Dubai airspace closure hits Sindhu

NEW DELHI, PTI: Double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu was on Saturday left stranded at Dubai airport en route to the prestigious All England Open badminton tournament, after flight operations were suspended owing to escalation of tensions in the Middle East.

The tournament is scheduled to start from next Tuesday. Sindhu took to Instagram and posted a video showing a crowded airport with a caption: "All flights suspended until further notice."

Later, the Indian shuttler said she was safe but stuck with her team. She added that the speed at which the tensions have escalated is "terrifying".

Lovlina, Nikhat to lead Indian squad at ABC

NEW DELHI, PTI: Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain and two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen will spearhead the 20-member Indian contingent at the Asian Boxing Championships in Mongolia from March 28-April 11.

The 20-member squad was finalised after an intensive month-long evaluation process, with players inducted into the ongoing national camp in Patiala following the National Championships.

As per the selection policy, finalists at the Asian Boxing Championships in the approved weight categories for the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games will be selected as direct entries for the respective multi-sport contingents.

Indian squad: Men: Vishwanath Suresh (50kg), Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (55kg), Sachin (60kg), Aditya Pratap Yadav (65kg), Deepak (70kg), Akash (75kg), Ankush (80kg), Lokesh (85kg), Harsh Choudhary (90kg), Narender (90+kg).
Women: Minakshi (48kg), Nikhat Zareen (51kg), Preeti (54kg), Jaismine (57kg), Priya (60kg), Ankushita Boro (65kg), Arundhati Choudhary (70kg), Lovlina Borgohain (75kg), Pooja Rani (80kg), Alfiya Tarannum Akram Khan Pathan (80+kg).

CULTURE AND COSMOS

The Epstein effect: Why smart people protect dangerous men

Shaifali Sandhya
is an international psychologist, former professor, and writer on culture, cosmopolitanism, and global affairs

The release of millions of Epstein documents revives a familiar question: Who protected Jeffrey Epstein?

Private jets waited on runways. Chandeliers large enough for train stations illuminated mansions where introductions altered careers overnight. For years, powerful guests moved through Epstein's world openly. The more unsettling question is not who knew, but how intelligent people stopped recognising harm in plain sight.

Court records leave little doubt that Epstein and Ghislaine Maxwell aided in the trafficking and horrific abuse of women and children. Epstein's story isn't just about hidden monsters. It is about naked power operating in plain view – and about how elite environments retrain moral judgment until the unacceptable becomes ordinary.

From a clinical psychology perspective, systems like Epstein's do not rely mainly on secrecy. Legal failures and institutional incentives enabled Epstein; psychological adaptation – the tendency to normalise belonging, access, and status – made him acceptable. Eppy, as he was known to his friends, cultivated complicity through obligation. He advised on lifestyle, coached business exits, facilitated introductions, and dispensed extraordinary gifts such as rare Swiss watches and Hermes bags. Even after Epstein was charged with soliciting prostitution, his friends helped him return to society, strategised on how to reverse negative publicity, and threw him gala parties. What appeared as friendship functioned as infrastructure – networks of obligation where loyalty blurred into complicity. This illustrates how influence disguises itself as intimacy.

Elite environments recalibrate perception – reshaping what feels risky, acceptable, or wrong. This bubble of rarified power, journalist Evan Osnos argues, is like a billionaire's superyacht, a floating fortress of extreme wealth that permits withdrawal. Proximity to power becomes mistaken for proof of character.

Dynamics within insulated groups are significant. Collapse starts with small rationalisations repeated until discomfort fades: "It's complicated," "Why would she go into a room with him if she didn't want it?" "They're adults." Insulating from corrective feedback and diffusing responsibility stretches tolerance ("if everyone is doing it, it's not so wrong"). Many of Epstein's friends claim, "I had no idea" – but awareness is seldom binary. We don't need full proof to sense something is wrong – yet uncertainty makes silence feel safer than speaking up. When dissent is socially costly, who wants to be the squeaky wheel?

Elite bubbles can self-select like-minded individuals who believe the rules don't apply to them. As their deviance becomes known but goes unpunished, and a group's tolerance of morality thins, it will attract others with suppressed similar impulses. This can shift an entire network's moral baseline over time.

Societies have long warned of the distortions caused by wealth. Herodotus recounts the story of Croesus, the wealthy king who asked the philosopher Solon to identify the happiest man, expecting affirmation of his own fortune. Solon, instead, warned that success can remove real feedback and isolate rulers from honest counsel. Croesus ignored the warning until a defeat opened his eyes, a phenomenon known as *hubris* or a gradual disconnection from reality.

Outside the golden bubble, court records document that the cost of the moral blindness was borne by children and women. One survivor recalls feeling suicidal: "subjected to sexual predation multiple times a day... the sexual demands, degradation, and humiliation became so horrific that I attempted to escape by jumping off a cliff into shark-infested waters." Virginia Giuffre remembers her fright at being "passed around like a platter of fruit". A third is unnerved even today, recalling: "When Jeffrey would see me, he would physically shake because he wanted to get at me." The survivors report feeling "we were disposable" and corroborate the research of Dacher Keltner and others: high status decreases empathy; when people belong to a lower status, their suffering becomes abstract.

Maxwell helped recruit and groom underage girls. History offers a troubling continuity for this moral aberration. Across cultures, systems of sexual or gendered patronage relied on female intermediaries – from the *maîtresse de maison* who managed licensed brothels in 19th-century France, to the *okasan* overseeing geisha houses in Japan, to translate exploitation into familiarity.

The Epstein world was extreme, but the psychology sustaining it is ordinary. In privileged closed networks marked by steep hierarchies, opaque advancement, powerful gatekeepers, and weak protections, a few predatory individuals do not merely exploit a system – they reset its moral vision.

We rarely recognise these systems while we are inside them. Under the right conditions, people learn not to see what threatens their status. At high success, psychological clarity becomes a strategic advantage for leaders to understand the blind spots success can create.

The question is no longer who protected Epstein but whether we will recognise the same dynamics when they are closer to us – and whether we will recognise the next Epstein while he is still being protected.

INSCRUTABLE CHINA

A quiet test of nuclear defiance

Earlier this month, Thomas DiNanno, the United States Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, made a startling remark that China had conducted, in 2020, nuclear tests at Lop Nur, "including preparing for tests with designated yields in the hundreds of tons", and that its nuclear arsenal was expanding to 1,000 warheads by 2030.

This is a significant jump, from an estimated 190 weapons a decade ago to about 600 a couple of years ago, even though China has officially maintained that it only has a "handful" of such weapons. Although it has stated it would not enter a nuclear arms race, the expansion of fissile material production and delivery systems suggests an active contest is emerging.

Notwithstanding the rampant corruption in China's military, including in its strategic rocket forces, as seen in the dismissal of commander Li Yuchao and deputies Liu Guangbin and Zhang Zhenzhong, the country continues to modernise its nuclear arsenal.

Miniaturisation and tactical nuclear weapon development are said to be the main focus of the recent test. It was reported that in the 1980s and 1990s, China's fissile material production at its 14 nuclear sites – specifically at Lanzhou and Heping – was slow, but it has expanded phenomenally over the last decade.

Towards increasing the production of plutonium, China is building two new fast breeder reactors (CFR-600) at Changbiao Island in the Fujian province. It must be noted that the concealed test was done on June 22, 2020, a week after the Galwan clashes with India. Despite China's denial of the test and its refusal to join the strategic arms reduction talks with the US and Russia, this has a significant bearing on the emerging nuclear order.

When India tested its nuclear weapon in 1998, China was at the forefront, along with the US, to pass the No. 1172 Resolution in the UN Security Council, which called to "cap, roll back and eliminate" India's nuclear capability and impose debilitating sanctions in this connection. China has maintained this position in its strategic engagement with India. As it proliferated nuclear technologies and ballistic missiles to Pakistan, China has refused to discuss any escalatory control measures with India in the nuclear domain.

Srikanth Kondapalli
The JNU Prof has been Peking behind the Bamboo Curtain for 30 years
@Sri_Kondapalli

China's growing nuclear arsenal was on display at the military parade in September last year in Beijing, where the country showcased its triad of nuclear-ready capabilities in land, air, and sea. The parade also featured advanced precision-strike vehicles and technological capabilities in automation, AI, and lasers. This display came against the backdrop of expansive efforts to build ballistic missile silos at Yumen and Hami in the western regions of China. These programmes underline what China's White Papers have called "medium-and long-range precision strikes" that signify challenges to the regional and global orders.

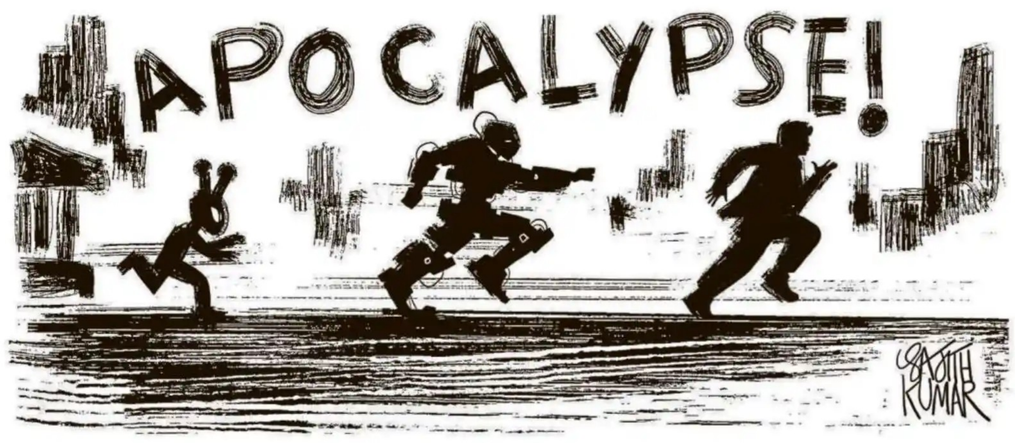
In addition, despite the 1964 pledge of minimum nuclear deterrence, which suggests a strategy of delayed counter-strike, Chinese military officials underline a shift in approach – from "how to hide" to "how to fight" – apart from preparations for "launch under attack" and, more significantly, to the swift "launch on warning" operational doctrine.

After Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen made a phone call to President-elect Donald Trump ahead of his first term in December 2016, China test-fired the DF-41 ICBM from Heilongjiang in what was perceived as a warning signal. However, as a conciliatory measure, China notified the US when it test-fired the DF-41 ICBM from Hainan into the Pacific Ocean on September 25, 2024.

China may be preparing for a power transition with the US by undertaking these decisive measures in the modernisation of nuclear forces. However, to realise such a goal, the country has to take the lead in the regional order in Asia. China provided diplomatic and other support to North Korea in the latter's quest to nuclearise the Korean Peninsula. Pyongyang has also been involved in the proliferation to Pakistan, raising concerns for India.

While India and China have a "no first use" policy, and no N-word was spoken by either country in the recent stand-offs, both have been preparing to enhance their capabilities in nuclear deterrence, shifting gradually from dissuasion.

The rapid expansion of China's nuclear arsenal may primarily indicate a posture of defiance directed at the US. The development, however, also poses significant challenges to India. A nuclear capability, once built, can be pitched against any adversary as a tool of coercion. In a regional order marked by competing global powers, this capability can also mean a formidable threat to stability.



KNOWN UNKNOWNS

Creativity of one, powered by the many

In a recent workshop, I posed a simple question to the participants: What does creativity mean to you? The responses were as varied as the attendees themselves. Some spoke of originality. Others of courage. A few mentioned 'discomfort'. That diversity is instructive. Creativity is rarely a solitary spark. More often, it is the visible surface of a layered inheritance, made personal through judgment, craft, and risk.

Margaret Boden classifies creativity into three kinds: exploratory, combinational, and transformational. Exploratory creativity works within a given framework. Combinational creativity fuses existing ideas in novel ways. Transformational creativity alters the framework itself.

Theory, however, rarely lives in abstraction. It finds expression in people, in rooms, in conversations. My summers were spent in Narayanaguda, Hyderabad. The street opposite Deepak Mahal Talkies was, in those years, a quiet crucible of artistic exchange. Artists, writers, and filmmakers gathered at my grandfather's house to assemble, argue, and refine their styles. Thota Vaikuntam was among them. I watched his work evolve gradually, the forms becoming bolder, the faces more stylised, the colours more assured. Creativity was never solitary. It was shaped in conversation, in disagreement, in shared tea, and in long afternoons of debate.

In Vaikuntam's work, one sees exploratory and combinational creativity at play. Consider his works alongside those of his contemporary, Laxma Goud. Both were influenced by their teacher, KG Subramanyan, affectionately known as Mani *Da*. Subramanyan did not impose a style; he cultivated a sensibility. He encouraged his students to explore and combine folk idioms, everyday life, and indigenous craft traditions, while remaining intellectually alert to global modernist movements.

Vaikuntam's bold, stylised figures rooted in Telangana village life are a distilled cultural memory. Goud's etchings, often intimate and sensual, carry the imprint of rural Andhra. Both artists are unmistakably individual, shaped by lived experience. Yet their individuality was amplified by a shared teacher, shared traditions, and sustained artistic dialogue. The individual voice emerged from collective inheritance, and the common influence is noticeable.

If Subramanyan exemplifies the nurturing of plural voices, Wassily Kandinsky exemplifies transformation. In 1913, Kandinsky pushed painting beyond representation, arguing that colour and form could evoke emotion independent of objects. This was not merely a new style. It was a new grammar. Depiction was now an experience.

Gopichand Katragadda
The former CTO of Tata Group and founder of AI company Myelin Foundry is driven to peel off known facts to discover unknown layers
@Gkatragadda

Transformation, however, is not confined to art. In engineering, the TRIZ methodology, derived from analysing hundreds of thousands of patents, challenges the myth of solitary genius. It studies patterns across inventions and extracts principles that can be recombined to resolve new contradictions. TRIZ is combinational creativity made systematic. It draws upon accumulated insight to empower individual problem-solving.

The role of the machine

Where, then, does AI fit into this landscape? AI systems today are trained on vast corpora of human expression. They synthesise what humanity has already achieved, suggesting compositions, styles, and references at a new scale. In that sense, AI is a compressed archive of collective expression, rendered usable on demand.

But synthesis is not the same as experience. In the workshop, I urged participants to begin not with an admired emotion, but with one they had felt. Sit with that feeling until it becomes uncomfortable. Use AI to explore possible forms of expression and then remove the machine when making the final choices. Decide what stays and what is discarded. Let imperfection remain.

AI may know every painter who came before you. It may generate a convincing echo of their voice. But the stroke of the brush must still tremble in your hand. The responsibility of meaning cannot be delegated. Creativity in the next age will continue to use technology, including AI, but it need not surrender to it. AI can amplify exploratory and combinational creativity by widening access to references and accelerating iteration. Transformational creativity, however, often demands lived tension, moral choice, and emotional risk. Subramanyan, Vaikuntam, and Goud show that originality is rarely born in isolation. Kandinsky reminds us that frameworks can be reimagined. TRIZ teaches us that patterns can be mined and recombined.

AI now offers us the accumulated work of civilisation in an accessible form. Yet the emotion must still be ours.

Do not outsource your feelings. Let the machine synthesise. Let it show you the history you inherit. But bring your own doubt, your own joy, and your own unfinished grief. Only then does the work begin to live.

THE BIG LENS

Prahaar: New rules of retribution

India's Ministry of Home Affairs has announced the National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Strategy, a first for the country, emphasising zero tolerance for any attempt to jeopardise national interests. Conceived under the acronym PRAHAAR, the strategy is centred on responses that are swift and proportionate to the terror threat at hand, a whole-of-government approach, mitigation processes that are also informed by human rights and the rule of law, stronger guardrails against radicalisation, and alignment with international counter-terror efforts.

It proposes to use all available legal frameworks, such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), the country's primary anti-terror legislation. The plan also envisages an intelligence- and tech-led crackdown on terror financing, using security and anti-terrorism agencies; its scope covers both home-grown and cross-border terrorist outfits.

While India has been a target of terrorism for more than six decades, the use of terror as a State strategy by Pakistan accelerated after the 1971 war and the subsequent liberation of Bangladesh. The Pakistan army has aided non-state actors capable of causing heavy civilian and military casualties in India, especially in Jammu and Kashmir. The menace of terrorism has since spread to other states that were untouched by such elements of extremism – the vulnerabilities were exposed in multiple incidents across the country, most tellingly in the dastardly November 2008 attack in Mumbai.

Since 2014, the three Union governments led by Narendra Modi have prioritised addressing terrorism. Of course, there have been attacks on the Army and civilians in Jammu and Kashmir, but the frequency of these transgressions has reduced considerably. The government has taken a markedly aggressive line of action against the perpetrators, with a larger vision pegged to absolute deterrence – dismantling training camps, neutralising terror infrastructure and handlers, and cutting the fund inflows.

Nevertheless, these fragmented strategic points needed to be crystallised into a robust, structured framework to facilitate certain, credible action, which the new policy promises to provide. The approach of the government and the security agencies towards domestic, regional, and global terrorism works at different levels. Partnerships are forged in line with these diverse objectives. A case in point is the Joint Working Group (JWG) on counter-terrorism, which India has with the government of Israel. Even as Prime Minister Modi, during his recent visit to Israel, assured that country all-out support in tackling terrorism, a meeting of the JWG was held in New Delhi, where the two sides decided to work out finer details of cooperation.

Seshadri Chari
reads between the lines on big national and international developments from his vantage point in the BJP and the RSS
@seshadrichari

The government undoubtedly needs to explore engaging with like-minded institutions and countries in the region for greater regional diplomatic stabilisation, intelligence exchange, and technological cooperation. There is also a greater urgency among the security agencies and policymakers to eradicate terrorism. Equipped with advanced technology, ideologically driven extremist modules can penetrate multiple strata of society.

A policy document, therefore, has to take into consideration all these integrated and non-conventional threat perceptions that cover evolving domains, such as cyber, energy, and space. The new policy document needs to be elaborated to include ways and means to identify and eliminate elements that pose dangers to national security and integrity. One cannot deny the existence and dangerous proliferation of radical elements in society. Typically, they have a presence in ecosystems that address local grievances and schisms. They are known to be using online platforms to identify, track, and recruit foot soldiers to implement their divisive agendas. This danger is exacerbated by a polarised political climate, where vote-bank considerations lead to civil liberties and rights being misused to legitimise anti-national interests.

Several suggestions have been made in the past to the government to prepare a comprehensive national security doctrine on the lines of a nuclear doctrine. Counter-terrorism action should adhere to a rulebook. Many times, action on the spur of the moment is seen as a befitting reply, but there is always the danger of such actions turning out to be short on long-term impact. A national security doctrine is all the more important to put in place certain standard operating procedures (SOPs) which are missing in the present setting.

PRAHAAR strikes a clear note. It is a strategic step in the right direction, but to make it tactically and operationally potent, the country will need a broader policy document that enunciates methodologies for the ideological counter-narrative, projects a strong political will, and endorses pathways of consensus and reconciliation.

THAT BLIND RHODES SCHOLAR

From favours to full rights: Rethinking disability jurisprudence

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India's disability rights jurisprudence stands at an uneasy crossroads. On paper, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act), marks a decisive shift from charity to rights, from welfare to enforceable entitlements. This is complemented by many progressive judgments that have breathed life into these rights and insisted that all stakeholders in society must do their bit to help make these rights real. In many courtrooms, however, a different story unfolds.

When found on the opposing side of a case filed by a person with disability, respondents can often be heard saying they do not treat the case as "adversarial". In the legal system, the typical approach is adversarial: one side presents an argument, and the other rebuts it. By saying they wish to take a non-adversarial approach, lawyers often mean that they want to be constructive and not spar on technical niceties, but instead focus on finding a solution to the problem at hand.

So far, so good. The problem arises when "non-adversarial" becomes a shield for preventing a thorough and fact-based consideration of the issue within the framework of law and, instead, turns into finding a compromise formula that all parties can live with.

Those in the legal profession often resort to euphemisms such as "differently abled" or "specially abled" – phrases many disability rights scholars reject as patronising and evasive. The law uses precise terminology: "persons with disabilities". Nothing more, nothing less. More troubling is how this mindset shapes relief. Court orders frequently resolve disputes through negotiated concessions, rather than authoritative declarations of law. The outcome is driven less by constitutional principle and more by what the respondent is willing to concede after judicial prodding. That courts want to come up with solutions that practically work for both parties is understandable, but the result is fragmented, piecemeal justice, which sometimes results in more litigation. Professor Ameeta Dhanda has described this as the "fire-fighting" role of courts – intervening to extinguish immediate hardship without addressing systemic non-compliance. Fire-fighting saves the day; it does not rebuild the structure.

This is not for want of doctrinal clarity. The Supreme Court has laid down robust principles in cases such as *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC*, *Jeeja Ghosh v. Union of India*, and *Om Rathod v. Director General of Health* Services. These cases clarify that reasonable accommodation is a matter of fundamental right; that issues concerning the disabled must be approached through a rights-based approach. Yet, many disability cases are resolved as if they were pleas for indulgence rather than enforcement of statutory rights.

The structural design of enforcement compounds the problem. Under the RPwD Act, a person with disability may approach the Chief Commissioner or State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD/SCPD). But these authorities possess recommendatory powers, not coercive ones. Their directions lack executory teeth. If a respondent ignores a recommendation, the aggrieved person must approach a High Court or another judicial forum.

If a favourable judgment is secured, implementation may require contempt proceedings. If the respondent appeals, the litigant is propelled into another round of litigation. Unfortunately, governments frequently contest disability rights rulings vigorously. A recent case in point is a Central Administrative Tribunal judgment from September 2025. This judgment set aside the failure to provide a reservation for individuals with disabilities of the mind, contrary to the RPwD Act, 2016, and ordered reconsideration of this matter before the notification for the Civil Services Exams 2026. Instead of complying with this forward-looking and rights-based judgment, the Union of India chose to challenge it in the Delhi High Court by way of a writ petition, which was ultimately dismissed. [disclosure: I was the lawyer for the applicants in this case].

A rights-based statute cannot function in an adversarial culture that treats every accommodation as a concession extracted under pressure.

Non-adversarial procedure was meant to soften the edges of litigation for vulnerable groups. It was not meant to dilute enforceable rights into moral appeals. Disability rights cases require empathy, but they must be decided strictly according to the law, imposing legally prescribed consequences on those who fail to comply. What is required are structural directives, heavy penalties for egregious violations, and a firm discouragement of routine appeals of judgments that favour the disabled person and lack legal infirmity. If disability rights are to move beyond lollipops and fire-fighting, we must resist the temptation of easy compromise. The promise of the RPwD Act is not charity in instalments. It is equality in full.

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PERSONAL

Change of Name

I, SANSKRUTI S CHINCHEWADI, D/o Sudesh Shrikant Chinchewadi, residing at No. 7, Vijayashri, 3rd cross, 1st main, Basavasamithi Layout, Thindlu, Vidyaranyapura post Bengaluru - 560097, have corrected my name from SANSKRUTI CHINCHEWADI to SANSKRUTI S CHINCHEWADI. Hereafter I shall only be called as SANSKRUTI S CHINCHEWADI for all official purposes. This correction is made as per affidavit dated 06/01/2026, duly sworn before the Notary Public.

I, RENITA AGNES GALBOV D/o Robert Anthony Galbov, Residing at No. 30, Suvarna Nagara, Near Anjineya Temple, Doddabidarakallu, Nagasandra Post, Bangalore North, Bangalore- 560073, Karnataka. have changed my name from RENITA AGNES GALBAO to RENITA AGNES GALBOV vide affidavit date 26.02.2026 before Notary N Mahesha, Bangalore IN-KA93714564447990Y.

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In this deeply personal reflection, Sumaa Tekur finds herself in the charged stillness that follows goodbyes. In that in-between space, she confronts what endings demand of us, and explores how letting go is less about loss and more about treating oneself with grace

Staying through the storm

DH ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

Last month, I ended a friendship that had lasted decades. It wasn't dramatic; there was no shouting or blame-placing. I quietly withdrew, making myself unavailable for the persistent testing of my boundaries and the digs at my life choices, all wrapped neatly in the ribbon of humour — the laugh-out-loud variety. When this "friend" was making jokes at the expense of my life, the envy was silent, but the giggles in the room were loud. I heard the whoosh sound of her escaping her own mind.

She called it "closeness", but they were knives hidden in the flower bouquet. Years ago, I had relegated this friendship to my outer circle of acquaintances. But here she was again, making use of the slightest opening to access my energy and to insist she belonged. That day, I closed the door on that chapter. I felt a curious mix of sadness and relief.

What happened next revealed even more of her state of mind. She called and texted with the persistence of a mountain goat. Her heart knew that she had crossed the line of dignity a long time ago, but she wanted to drag me back into her theatre. She wanted to force me to take a seat and watch her stage performance. But I went silent. Shy of barging in through my front door, she tried every trick — prodding, poking, insulting my intelligence — through the various forms that digital communication today would allow. My silence rendered them all useless.

Curiously, this wasn't the only ending of 2025. Two other long friendships, one spanning over three decades (unable to deal with the closure, he barged in through my front door and I still shudder at the thought), the other four decades old (a childhood friendship), fell away with some grating noise. I began to notice a pattern: 2025 was the year of letting go. The leaves had to fall before anything new could grow.

Letting go with grace

Goodbyes are inevitable. People leave. Situations change. Life blooms in many other ways. But the space when one person has left, and another hasn't yet entered, is most revealing of our mental and emotional state. It answers the most crucial question: How healthy are you, really? This liminal space can also be brutally unforgiving in its revelations of our state of mind and the grace and dignity with which we flow through life. It asks: Are you ready to let go with grace, and are you willing to accept something new?

The most beautiful and difficult thing about letting go is that it's never a single act. It's beautiful because life hands you not one but many chances to let go. The difficulty is in surrendering to the waves that hit at the most inopportune times, trusting that there is an all's-well-that-ends-well to this.

I still remember sitting in my balcony one evening, giving company to the mango tree and the parrots that came to perch on its broad, sinewy branches. The air was thick with the scent of impending rain. My mind was pulled to all the friendships and other types of relationships that ended in the year. The memory strands braided into the past with every goodbye of my emotional life. The evening painted itself in the colours of melancholy, not in a ruminative way, but to release parts of the emotions that don't serve me anymore.

A longing for closure

Grief often comes in waves. Unexpectedly. Sometimes months after a goodbye, sometimes years. And yet, this is the spiritual work of love: sitting with the emptiness, learning to breathe through it, discovering myself in the pause. Relationship endings are rarely about the other person. They are mirrors, showing us our own limits, patterns and our unspoken needs. After the friend I pulled away from texted again, I noticed mild irritation rising in me. I wanted the chapter to be over. I realised that my longing for closure had nothing to do with her — it had everything to do with me. I didn't need her words to feel whole. So, I employed the classic closure technique — one that rarely fails — 'write the letter that you never send'. I wrote everything I wished I had said, read it aloud and then tore up the paper into bits. In that act, I found my own closure.

Focus on joy

When I began writing my book, I thought it would be a journal of breakups, especially romantic relationships. But as I worked through my own endings, I realised that every ending — whether the relationship was contained as romantic or not — gave me yet another opportunity to meet myself all over again, this time in a deeper, more intimate way. But insights about ending something are hard to come by. We are socially conditioned to focus on joy. We read so much about how to start a relationship, how to grow it and how to save it. But there is so little said about the processing of an end that happens in private, deep within the mind and psyche. Where, then, do we learn from?

Imperfect love

In searching for such guidance, I turned to Indian mythology, our evergreen and ever-generous source of wisdom for all of life's truths. When I dipped into this resource, I discovered stories full of imperfect love, stories where endings were not failures but transformations.

Dhruva's tale, for instance, of phenomenal spiritual growth that came from parental neglect, is more telling of the insight that no type of relationship is immune from the pull of dark human emotions — envy, greed, manipulation, desire and a combination of these and more. Dhruva grieved the loss of paternal love, but he transmuted that loss into self-growth. The Dhruva-Tare, named after him, is both the unwavering north star guiding those who are lost, and it is also a shining reminder in the sky that we are more than a sum of all our relationships.

I was initially drawn to Nala and Damayanti's fairytale, complete with swans, love letters and a meet-cute romance that filled the mind and soul in an idealistic way. But their journey post-marriage was full of trials and separation. When they reunited, life had meaning because of their individual journeys, not despite them.

It's the same for the story of Krishna and Sudama's enduring friendship. It tells us that bonds can evolve, shift, and survive in unexpected ways. Each story that I read and chose to include in the book felt like a mirror to my own experiences in the year of letting go, each offering a chance for growth.

Tangled patterns

Some relationships leave us tangled in intense patterns. Cognition alone is insufficient to make sense of the 'what' and 'why'. These are typically what many call karmic connections. I once had an intense romance that lasted seven years. It was more off than on, but no matter how many unsent letters I wrote and burnt to ashes, the feelings would rise like a phoenix taking charge of my entire being. I was simply unable to let go. For the first time, I understood what wise elders meant when they said, "When the time is right, it will happen."

Divine timing is a theme that Indian mythology shows through its powerful stories. Sita's wait. Karna's justice. Nandi's patience. Urmila's sacrifice. All of these are odes to divine timing. I often joke with friends at times that I am keeping busy while waiting for the big twist in my tale. But secretly, I also know that what I keep busy with is as essential to my journey as the twist when it does arrive. This is the power of divine timing.

Courage to grow

Relationships that end — abruptly, smoothly or in whatever way — are not failures. Divorce is not failure. An affair gone wrong is not a failure. A separation is not failure. Each one is a mirror. Each ending is asking us these questions. How do you attach to people? Is it a healthy attachment style? Do you cling, push or pull? Where is the limit to your dignity?

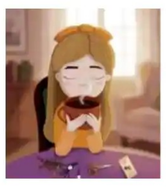
The ability to honestly answer this for ourselves — not to another but to ourselves — reveals our courage to grow. Here's where we see where love expands into self-preservation, with or without another's presence. Endings, then, are not just closures — they are openings. They give us space to reflect, to grieve and to meet ourselves fully. They allow us to reimagine who we are, how we love, and how we move forward. Each of us has to learn to say goodbye without waiting for perfection, where we find strength in the spaces left behind, and finally discover that the heart can grow even in loss.

That's when a goodbye turns to a hello. To the self.

The author writes about spirituality, women's lives and the joy of solo living. Her latest book, 'Goodbye, I love(d) you!' was recently published by Hay House Publishing.

Practising self-awareness

Some connections feel magnetic, fated, and impossible to resist. They can be romantic, familial, or friendships, and they often mirror our deepest attachment patterns. I remember a friendship that ended after 27 years: the highs felt exhilarating, the lows devastating. But in the aftermath, I saw myself clearly. I saw the patterns I had repeated, the limits of my endurance and the boundaries I needed to honour. These relationships teach us that love is not just about another person; it is a practice in self-awareness, dignity, and self-love.



Giving yourself a gift

I once kept a message unopened for weeks, waiting for an apology I knew might never come. One evening, I sat with my journal and wrote everything I'd wanted to say. Then I read it aloud, letting the words fill the empty room. In that act, I realised closure is not something granted by another person. It's a gift we give ourselves. Sometimes, it's as simple as naming the grief, honouring the love that existed, and allowing yourself to release it. That became the day I stepped into my own power.

MIXED BAG

'Mixed Bag' is your Sunday potpourri — an assortment of snappy articles, engaging ideas and snackable nibbles about this and that, from here and there. Dip in!

Rocky illusion at Pont Neuf

He is known as the French Banksy, or simply JR. Now the artist popular across France for large-scale projects, from photographs to graffiti and street art, wants Parisians to do something unusual on the city's arguably most famous bridge.

In June, he plans to transform the bustling Pont Neuf that dates back to the 17th century into a walk-through "cave", a temporary, monumental public artwork that will cover the stone arches with a rocky illusion and invite visitors to cross the River Seine through a tunnel, complete with sound and digitally augmented reality. He says it's possibly the "largest immersive installation ever made"

Pont Neuf bridge in Paris.

and one that will be accessible around the clock and offer a "totally different approach" to the bridge.

"We're about to leave something pretty incredible in the middle of Paris," JR told *AP* at his studio in eastern Paris, wearing his trademark hat and shades. His project, the Pont Neuf Cavern, is to run June 6-28, spanning 120 metres (yards) in length and over 17 metres in height.

The installation is a nod to a Paris legend: the late artistic duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude, who in 1985 wrapped Pont Neuf, and its street-lamps, in a pale golden fabric. The project, which took years of negotiations with the authorities, helped define the genre of monumental public art in modern cities across the world.

From the outside, his installation will make Pont Neuf look "as if it has been overtaken by a prehistoric outcrop," a structure visible along the banks of the Seine, a rocky mass that is "literally going to break the landscape," he said.

AP

A museum through his eyes...

When most people walk into a museum or a gallery, their eyes dart about the walls of corridors and halls, taking in whatever is on display: paintings in frames, sculptures on plinths, pottery shards in vitrines — the art, in other words. They are not necessarily preoccupied with where the dust sits in the room. Bruno Goppion is not like most people. When he enters a museum, he is looking for, as he put it, an invitation to a pristine experience. Are the display cases cloudy? Is the paint on the wall chipped? Is there an exposed outlet? Is the work greeting the visitor, or is he or she left having to search for a connection? Goppion, 33, is the third generation of Goppion at Goppion, an Italian company that crafts display cases and exhibits for many of the world's leading museums, including the Met, the Louvre and the National Gallery. As he sees it, if he does his job right, no one else will notice what he notices upon walking into a museum.

Bruno Goppion in one of his family's workshops outside Milan. NYT PIC

"I am figuring out always, when I enter a space, what it is this institution is trying to tell about the history or the meaning of what they're exhibiting," Goppion said.

NYT

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ASTROSPEAK

Guruji Shrii Arnav

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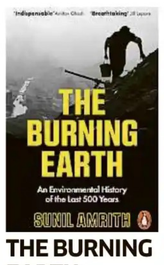
This critically acclaimed work tracks how human ambition has reshaped the planet and asks if our appetite for progress can co-exist with nature, writes Sudhirendar Sharma

Empire of extraction

The book suggests that the continuous struggle to fulfil human wants has driven much of humanity's transformative impact on nature. Seen here are workers at the Mudere Mine in DRC.



THE BURNING EARTH
Sunil Amrith
Penguin,
pp 432, Rs 799

By the turn of the current century, a three-degree rise in the combined effects of temperature and humidity could make life unbearable for at least 3.25 billion people.

By then, the monsoon cycle may grow deeply erratic, and glaciers might exist largely as digital archives. Much will have changed, and doomsday models already sketch dreadful scenarios. Nothing of the kind may happen, climate change sceptics argue. To prevent such outcomes, the world's governments agreed to limit global warming to no more than an additional 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Far from mitigating the temperature rise, however, the planet has already warmed by around 1.2 to 1.4 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, bringing the 1.5-degree threshold perilously close. Recent unprecedented floods across South and Southeast Asia have been linked by scientists to rising global temperatures and intensifying climate variability. Worse may lie ahead: recent years, including 2023 and 2024, have ranked among the hottest ever recorded. Yet the urgency of this emerging reality, steadily inching closer, has not fully compelled collective global action.

Abrupt climatic changes are acting upon a world long moulded to serve human needs and desires. Yale University historian Sunil Amrith argues that the human transformation of nature began long before the Industrial Revolution and accelerated thereafter. The seeds of this transformation, he suggests, were sown as early as the medieval period.

The Charter of the Forest, issued by England's King Henry III in 1217, formally acknowledged certain rights for common people to use forests for grazing, fuel, and cultivation. While intended as a check on royal power, such measures also reflected a broader shift in how nature came to be viewed as a resource for human use. Until the advent of the Industrial Revolution, relatively stable climate patterns enabled imperial and colonial powers to clear land, expand cultivation, and build cities at an unprecedented scale.

The Industrial Revolution, in turn, fuelled energy-hungry economic systems that transformed nature into commodities. The harnessing of fossil fuels fostered a worldview in which human freedom appeared to defy natural limits, expanding the horizons of what could be made, extracted, and consumed.

The Burning Earth is an environmental history, and, in the author's formulation, all history is environmental history. It examines both the environment's influence on human societies and the profound impact of those societies on the natural world. Taking a long historical view, the book suggests that the continuous struggle to fulfil human wants and desires has driven much of humanity's transformative impact on nature.

Amrith identifies three distinct "time zones" in global environmental history. He traces major ecological turning points to events such as large-scale deforestation following medieval land policies, the Mongol expansions across Central Asia and western Eurasia, and the spread of crops such as rice across regions, which reshaped landscapes and agrarian systems.

Around the same time, European colonial expansion initiated the transatlantic slave trade, severing enslaved people from their relationships with land and food systems. Christopher Columbus and other Iberian conquistadors brought war, conquest, and diseases that devastated Indigenous populations in the Americas, including the Aztecs and Incas. These processes led to the disappearance of habitats and the decline of species across continents. All these developments reveal a persistent interplay of need and greed: the extraction of gold for global trade, the emergence of powerful financial centres, and centuries of dependence on fossil fuels. Today, the contest for resources increasingly includes access to water, intensifying existing inequalities. Addressing the planetary crisis is further complicated by the limited moral authority of wealthy nations, which have historically contributed most to environmental degradation, even as they urge poorer nations to curb their aspirations for growth and prosperity.

The Burning Earth offers a far-reaching survey of the central role played by human wants and desires in shaping — and often destroying — the planet. As things stand, the human impulse to script and harness nature is likely to grow even more elaborate in the centuries to come. In this expansive narrative, Amrith shows how humans not only transformed the material world through technology but were themselves transformed in the process. The book is an epic exploration of human ambition, yet it leaves the reader with unresolved questions about why such patterns persist and how meaningful change might emerge. Written with intellectual passion, the narrative is both insightful and provocative. As societies are gradually drawn deeper into a technologically mediated world, the book raises a pressing question: Will there remain sufficient space for freedom and democracy in a future shaped by ecological limits and technological control?

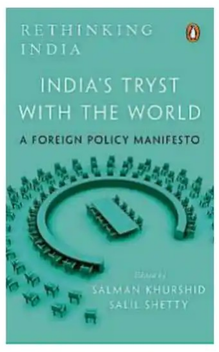
Amrith's work has received significant critical recognition for its ambitious scope and scholarly depth. The book's reception reflects its relevance to contemporary debates on climate, empire, and global inequality.

A dive into India's strategic dilemmas

This wide-ranging volume of essays ably maps the tensions shaping the country's global standing, its foreign policy choices and future ambitions, writes M K Chandra Bose

As India marches towards its centenary of independence, roadblocks are aplenty. A disruptive Trump administration, turmoil in global trade, looming threats of wars, a domineering China and the rise of the Right across the world are key factors that confront the nation. How policymakers navigate these challenges to protect national interests will determine India's position in the world by 2047.

Nursing a superpower ambition amid the geopolitical churn, will India succeed in maintaining strategic autonomy? How far will domestic factors influence foreign policy, and what will be the state of the economy in 2047? These are some of the questions that India's Tryst with the World, a foreign policy manifesto, tries to address. Part of the Rethinking India project, the volume is a collection of brilliant essays penned by leading academics, technocrats, activists and thinkers. Contributors include Manmohan Singh, Hamid Ansari, Shashi Tharoor, Shivshankar Menon, Shyam Saran, Nirupama Rao, Kishore Mahbubani, Jayati Ghosh and Sunita Narain.



INDIA'S TRYST WITH THE WORLD
Salman Khurshid & Salil Shetty (eds)
Vintage, pp 238,
Rs 750

Edited by Salman Khurshid and Salil Shetty, the collection offers in-depth analyses of the nation's present and future challenges. More than an academic exercise, the book frames foreign policy as a shared national concern rather than an expert's domain. A refrain of the essays is that only an economically and militarily strong India with the right democratic credentials will be able to play a role suited to its stature. The need to regain the nation's moral voice in the global arena, as in the Nehruvian era and Indira Gandhi's defiance of the US to create Bangladesh, is cited as a laudable example.

Divergent views emerge on facing the challenge from China. Manmohan Singh favours high growth to narrow the gap with China. He finds the admiration for the Chinese model of development, 'authoritarian state capitalism', misplaced. Kishore Mahbubani contends that India lacks a long-term strategy to manage China. He recalls how, in 1980, the Indian and Chinese economies were at the same level. By 2020, China's GDP ballooned to five times that of India. He attributes this success to opening up to global economic competition. India didn't. Shivshankar Menon foresees no immediate prospect of a thaw in ties with China. The change of status quo in Ladakh by China in 2020 is a clear warning. Till India transforms itself and its economy, the turbulence in mutual ties will continue.

Salman Khurshid advocates a restructuring of the foreign policy establishment by tripling the size of IFS intake in five years, reorienting training and adding more domain experts to meet present needs. Pointing out that the BJP government is undermining the foreign policy establishment, he cites fault lines like the scrapping of a separate ministry for Overseas Indian Affairs, the end of confidential briefings on important foreign policy issues to political parties by the PM, the use of the RSS foreign wing and the failure to promote soft power effectively. He bats for a principled, coherent foreign policy with a futuristic vision.

Nirupama Rao is upbeat on Indo-US relations, lauding expanding military ties and growing people-to-people cooperation. The confluence of Indian talent and American innovation will make all the difference, she says. She argues that in a multipolar world, India's strategic autonomy will remain a defining feature and that it will co-exist with deep partnerships. Keep engaged with the US to remain out of trouble is Shyam Saran's advice. "We are in a phase of deflated expectations."

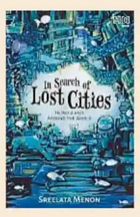
Salil Shetty draws readers' attention to the pitfalls of ill-conceived domestic policies derailing ties with neighbours. The aggressive immigration policy of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and NRC triggered protests in Bangladesh and Afghanistan and annoyed Islamic nations. Similarly, the abrogation of Article 370 provoked China to occupy Indian territory.

Conceding that India will remain far too important to be ignored, Jayati Ghosh voices concern over the state of the economy, with rising levels of inequality, unemployment and poverty. The loss of credibility due to the government's efforts to manipulate official data is disconcerting. On India's future role in the global economy, she asks: "Can the Modi government continue to mislead and distract people with religious nationalism, or would a collapsing economy and declining livelihoods ultimately also affect the political appeal of Hindutva?"

The volume makes for compelling reading for anyone interested in seeing India occupy its rightful place in the world.

BOOKRACK

IN SEARCH OF LOST CITIES

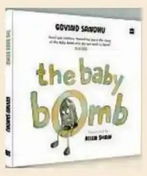


Sreelata Menon
Hachette, pp 248,
Rs 399
Whole cities have gone missing. Cities that were once bustling with people, palaces, temples and traders...gone! Were they swallowed by earthquakes? Zapped by aliens? Or just forgotten over time?

THE VIOLIN MAKER'S SECRET

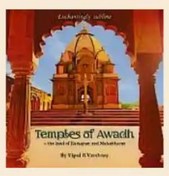
Evie Woods
HarperCollins,
pp 416, Rs 550
Baggage claims agent Devlin, retired teacher Walter, and appraiser Gabrielle all have nothing in common, but can these three unlikely guardians unlock the secrets of the violin?

THE BABY BOMB



Govind Sandhu and Allen Shaw (Illustrator)
Harper Children's,
pp 118, Rs 399
One day, as Baby readies himself for his end, he manages to escape to the depths of the ocean. There, he finally finds a home. But with the threat of war looming over humanity, will he succeed in his mission?

TEMPLES OF AWADH



Vipul B Varshney
Bharti publn,
pp 182, Rs 2,895
This book maps and documents over 150 temples, ghats and sarovars across Ayodhya, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj and Devipatan, built on five years of fieldwork, archival study, and scriptural research.

THE BINDING

Salma and Janani Kannan (translator)
Macmillan, pp 288,
Rs 499
In this book, the author grapples with the many forces that shape our lives: faith, family, tradition and the complicated bonds that link us.

INTERVIEW

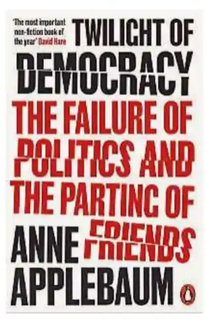
'We're seeing the flip side of globalisation'

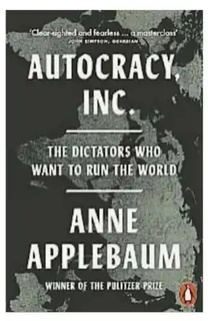
In a chat with Amritesh Mukherjee, historian-journalist Anne Applebaum discusses how modern autocracies function and why they are no longer about dictators

The world seems to be circling back to the age of authoritarianism it promised to turn its back on, not many decades ago. From history to modern politics, Anne Applebaum's books are a brilliant way to understand this world, forever in flux, forever the same. In a chat with *DHoS* at the Jaipur Literature Festival, she graciously spoke about the difference between the world today and then, the need of the hour for anyone who cares about democracy and a lot more. *Excerpts*

In Autocracy, Inc., you describe modern autocracies as networks driven by self-enrichment. Is this model new, or an evolution of the economic logic Naftaly Frenkel introduced to the 1920s' Gulag system?

There is a difference between the 20th- and the 21st-century versions. The Soviet Union wasn't trying to create an international web of interconnected companies, financial schemes, and money-laundering opportunities. The Gulag was a system of using slave labour inside Russia.





Modern autocracies function differently. It's not just one dictator with collaborators, dissidents, and police. It's a network connecting the state and quasi-state, quasi-private companies in one country with quasi-private, quasi-state companies in another. They share information about policing, share surveillance technology — China sells its surveillance technology all over the world — and sometimes work together on military operations.

In Russia's war in Ukraine, North Korean soldiers, Iranian drones, and Chinese money have helped the Russians stay on the battlefield. This is something new. It's the flip side of globalisation. Globalisation linked together the democratic world, companies, and people. It also linked together people who have a very different vision of society.

Anne Applebaum. (PIC COURTESY: WIKIMEDIA)

You trace the evolution of the German concept 'Wandel Durch Handel' (change through trade) into a kind of strategic corruption. Did the optimism that trade would export democracy blind democracies to importing authoritarianism?

Yes. Outreach to Russia and China in the 1990s and 2000s began from a belief that if we are interconnected, we won't go to war with each other. These were idealistic ideas. Companies could work together, build prosperity together, we would become richer, and that was good for everybody.

The reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War was about interconnection, joint institutions, working together, and everybody getting richer. It was a deep belief across a broad range.

What ended it was that, around 2010-13, leaders of autocratic societies, especially Putin and Xi, who had grown powerful through state capitalism and control of their economies, began to fear the language of liberal democracy because it inspired their own opposition. The Hong Kong democrats and the Navalny movement were about rights, anti-corruption, and transparency. This is when they began to push back.

Has the definition of the enemy in autocratic systems narrowed to those who demand accountability, like journalists/activists, or is the net widening again to include entire social classes, like in the 1930s?

It depends on the country. If you look at the United States right now, the Trump administration talks about radical left activists, by which it means Democratic politicians. Sometimes it talks about fighting immigrants. It depends on the moment.

Seeking to stay in power by creating enemies is the oldest political tactic, going back to ancient Rome. It's nothing new. The modern version feels more immediate because of social media. We can read it, see it, and feel it in real time.

In Red Famine, you discuss Raphael Lemkin's broad definition of genocide. In Autocracy, Inc., you note China and Russia are rewriting international law to replace human rights with sovereignty and win-win cooperation. Are we losing the semantic battle Lemkin started?

Countries that still believe in universal rights need to keep using that language. Russia and China don't want to use it, and the United States administration is fighting against it. If you care about that language and think it's important, find allies, form a coalition with people around the world who care about it, begin using it, and push hard.

What are you reading currently?

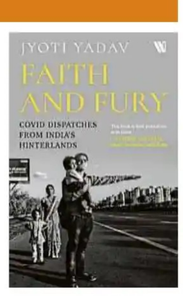
I've just finished Ian McEwan's What We Can Know, a new favourite. The novel is partly about how you can never really know about the past, which made me think about things I've written and wonder whether they were true.

READ OF THE WEEK

On the morning of May 7, 2020, young journalist Jyoti Yadav set out to cover the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and the migrant exodus that began once the country went into lockdown. She travelled on the highway and passing through small towns and villages, she documented the migrant crisis and the breakdown of India's healthcare infrastructure, battling frequent exhaustion, bouts of sickness, troll abuse, searing heat, abysmal sanitation, unreliable statistics and official resistance to truth- telling. Interviewing hundreds of people on the road, in local administrations, hospital staff, and the families of victims, she produced numerous stories that later received awards for fearless journalism. She set out again when the far deadlier Second Wave struck, collecting data which exposed the undercounting of deaths by the state governments.

In Faith And Fury, she gives us a riveting chronicle of the unremitting tragedy of Covid and the resilience that sometimes accompanied it.

Jyoti Yadav is known for her fearless ground reporting. For her work, she has been awarded many national and international honours, including the prestigious Ramnath Goenka Award 2020, the Journalist of the Year 2023 by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, and the UN Laadli Media Award for three consecutive years.



WHAT'S COOKING

Root for galangal

Galangal is widely used in Southeast Asian cuisine — it's an unmissable element in Thai recipes as well. It is a rhizome, and because it looks a lot like ginger, it is easy to confuse one for the other. In fact, galangal goes by the name Thai ginger. However, ginger is juicy and soft while galangal is hard and comes with a sharper and more intense flavour, and brings a citrusy note to dishes.

If you have tasted Thai cuisine — tom yum soup, which is a hot and sour soup, green curry or red curry, khao soi gai, which is a northern Thai noodle soup, or a range of stir fries, the aroma of galangal is hard to miss. Galangal is also used to make sauce for fish-based dishes.

You can buy galangal as a fresh root or in its powdered form (after being dried and ground).

Other uses

Apart from its uses in Thai cooking, the rhizome is also used to make an aromatic tea, with a dash of lemon and honey.

Galangal is known to have a range of health benefits — it's known to aid digestion and offer relief from pain, nausea and respiratory problems.

Curated by Savitha Karthik

*(**What's Cooking** shines the spotlight on a single ingredient, its nutritional qualities and the ways in which you can use it.)*

From classics served in generational eateries to creative new offerings in modern kitchens, Old Phuket Town's food scene is a blend of Malay, Southern Thai, Chinese-Hokkien, and sometimes European influences, giving rise to a distinctive Peranakan identity, writes Avantika Chaturvedi

PERANAKAN IN A BOWL

Once the nucleus of a tin-mining boom, Old Phuket Town is a living museum of cultural cross-currents—most notably its Chinese-Hokkien roots, layered with Southern Thai flavours. You see this history in pastel Sino-Portuguese shophouses, and you taste it in bowls of noodles dark with soy, turmeric perfumed coconut curries, and stir-fries punched up with shrimp paste and bitter greens.

Many of the town's signature flavours have been cooked the same way decades—sometimes over a century—by families who arrived from Fujian, married into Malay households, and adapted their food to the southern Thai pantry, giving rise to a distinctive Peranakan identity. From staple dishes served in generational eateries, to modern kitchens reinventing Peranakan heritage, here are some picks from Old Phuket Town's deeply historical yet ever-evolving food scene:

Hokkien and Peranakan staples

Mee Hoon Pad Hokkien is arguably the Old Town's most emblematic plate: thick, chewy wheat-and-egg noodles stir-fried in a dark, soy-forward sauce with seafood, pork, fish balls, greens, and a fried egg, often finished with crackling pork fat, and sometimes a dash of pig blood. You'll find a time-capsule version at Lock Tien, one of the last open-air kopitiams in town— less a restaurant than a communal food court that has resisted the pressures of modernisation. Alternatively, at 1000009 Thai Noodle Restaurant, noodles are treated as a kind of DIY craft, allowing diners to tailor bowls from a menu of noodle styles, slow-simmered broths, and proteins.

Another pillar of Peranakan cooking is Kaeng Pu Bai Cha Plu: fresh crab meat enriched with coconut milk and aromatics like galangal and kefir lime rather than the aggressive heat often associated with Thai food elsewhere. The sweetness from fresh crab and depth from slow cooking is championed and cooked to perfection at Raya Restaurant, in a century-old Sino-Portuguese mansion, run by three generations of women.

Mee Hoon Pad Hokkien is one of the Old Town's most emblematic plates. PICS BY AUTHOR

Mu Hong (slow-braised pork belly with pepper and garlic) is where the heat starts to pick up slightly. Thick slabs of pork belly arrive lacquered in a dark, glossy gravy, the meat spoon-tender from hours of gentle braising. Crushed garlic and black pepper announce themselves immediately on the nose. At One Chun Café & Restaurant, this Southern Thai dish is cooked the way many Phuket families remember from childhood.

Alongside these classics are dishes that appear humble but carry deep nostalgia. Look for Krapow Pla (fish stomach soup), prized for its gelatinous texture and comforting depth, and Pad Sataw (fried stink beans), whose sharp bitterness is softened with shrimp paste and chilies. One Chun Café & Restaurant excels at this everyday canon.

Cocktails and beer

Craft cocktails in Phuket Old Town tend to favour bitterness, spice, and spirits with weight. Black pepper, herbs and smoke mirror the flavours found on the plate. That philosophy comes through most clearly at Coolie's Club, where cocktails reference the town's working-class past with unusual precision. Drinks like Miner's Whisper, a wood-smoked Negroni opens with a curl of smoke; while the Spicy Maria is built on tequila with lime, Thai herbs, and chilli. The growing interest in craft beer has shifted drinking culture away from the popular mass market Thai lagers toward more expressive styles. That range is best explored at CRAFTs & Co., where the bar stocks more than 80 craft beers, including local Thai options like Chalawan Pale Ale from Full Moon Brew Works and the Railay Weisse by Croman, inside a heritage shophouse.

Burn butter toast at Phuketique.

Time for desserts

Dessert in Old Phuket Town is about small, satisfying pleasures—often enjoyed between meals as an excuse to linger a little longer in the heat. Even ice cream here carries a sense of place. At Tory's Ice Cream, flavours like black sesame and Phuket pineapple have become a rite of passage while wandering the candy-coloured lanes of Soi Rommanee. Another item has achieved cult status: the burnt butter toast at Phuketique. A thick slab of brioche is cooked in caramelised butter until crisp on the outside and plush within, then topped with ice cream. Its sweet-savoury indulgence is unapologetically rich, and well worth the extra calories.

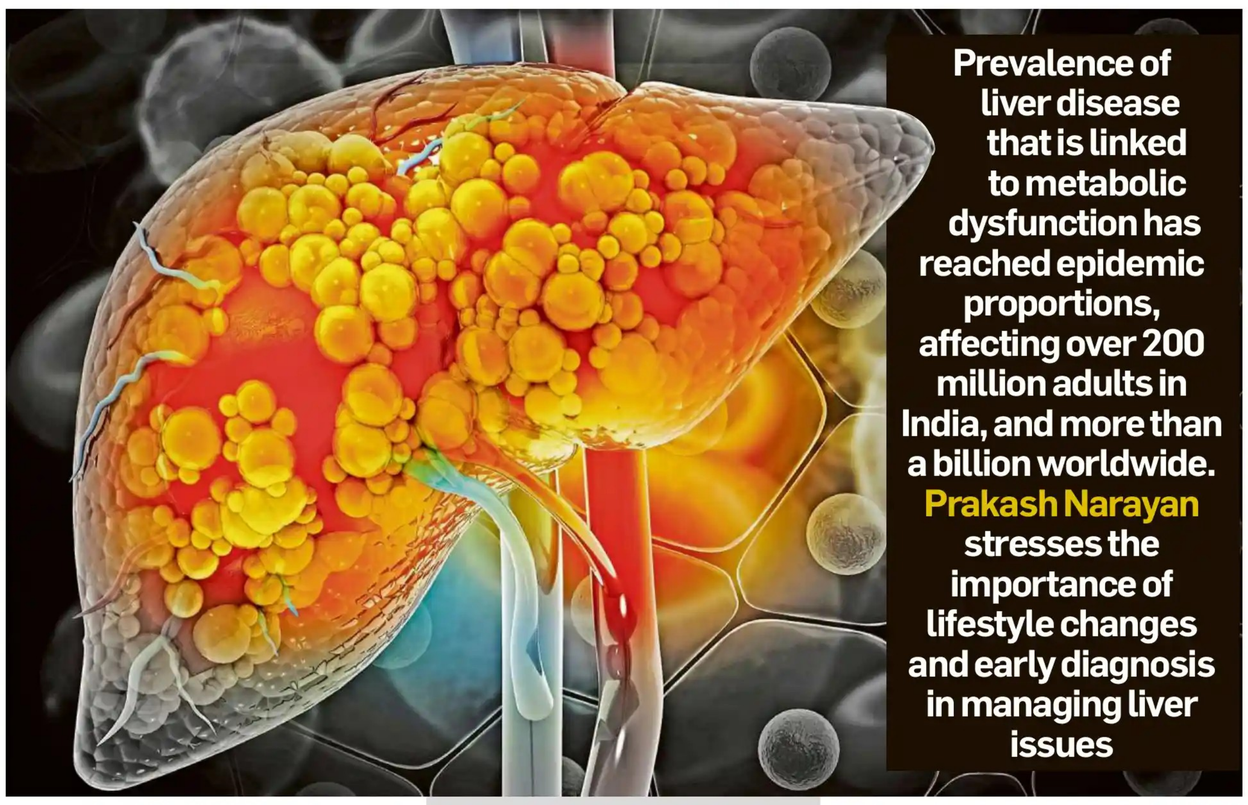
For something closer to traditional Chinese-Phuket sweets, old-style bakeries line their shelves with Tao Sor—flaky pastries filled with mung bean, purple sweet potato or yam (oh-nee ginkgo) pastes. There is also Mua Lao, a dense, labour-intensive sesame sweet traditionally made for weddings and religious offerings, and Pang Pia, sometimes called "mother's dessert," long associated with postpartum nourishment. Locals will tell you the best way to eat it is to pierce the pastry, drop an egg inside, then fry or bake it until the filling turns rich and savoury-sweet. You may also spot Kong Taeng, an old-school peanut-based confectionery snack. One of the best places to explore this Teochew- and Hokkien-influenced lineage is Keng-Tin, a long-running sweet shop where recipes straddle generations.

Kopi O, (Thai-style strong black coffee) with raw egg.

Smell the coffee

Coffee culture, too, skews equally traditional. Order Kopi O (Thai-style strong black coffee) and you may find it whisked with a raw egg, creating a surprisingly silky texture once hot coffee and condensed milk are stirred through. It's often paired with Pa Tong Go—fried dough sticks, crisp outside and airy within—meant for dunking. This combination, halfway between breakfast and dessert, is best experienced at morning kopitiams or coffee houses scattered around the Old Town, such as Kopi de Phuket and Kopitiam by Wilai.

Liver health: Why lifestyle matters



Prevalence of liver disease that is linked to metabolic dysfunction has reached epidemic proportions, affecting over 200 million adults in India, and more than a billion worldwide. Prakash Narayan stresses the importance of lifestyle changes and early diagnosis in managing liver issues

The shift in socioeconomic status and lifestyle in India, starting from the Nineties, has meant a major uptick in the number of eateries, ready-to-eat meals, consumption of processed foods, and most recently home delivery of literally anything and everything. This was, however, accompanied by burgeoning health-related risks. Stress levels and systemic inflammatory counts were elevated. Body roundness indices, waistlines, insulin resistance, HbA1c levels, blood pressure and triglyceride levels headed further north. The country was booming in more ways than one. Indeed, on a recent visit to Bengaluru, this author frequently observed relatively young people whose body mass index (BMI) appeared to exceed 35.

The association between metabolic syndrome, a cluster of biochemical and physiological abnormalities, and cardiovascular and/or cerebrovascular accidents has long been recognised. Most of the diagnostic testing continues to be geared toward these endpoints. Kidney health is now gaining attention, and rightly so, as diabetes with or without hypertension is the leading cause of end-stage renal disease.

Lifestyle changes

- Follow a healthy, strict (brown rice, bread, chapati) diet with moderate exercise at least five days a week.
- Undergo an annual physical or see your general practitioner at least twice a year, even if you appear outwardly healthy.
- Get a clinical chemistry (and CBC) test at least annually.
- Ask questions of your doctor; bring up concerns; do not conceal symptoms.

Liver disease: How and why

What is little known is that the liver equally plays Hercules in bearing the brunt of metabolic syndrome. In so far as the liver is concerned, end-organ damage manifests as metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD). In addition to metabolic syndrome, emerging research indicates that risk-conferring genetic variations and the gut microbiome play a significant role in this disease. A continuum, MASLD starts with lipid accumulation in the liver, and can progress to inflammation (metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis - MASH), scarring and cirrhosis. Cirrhosis without obvious cause, i.e., cryptogenic cirrhosis, is now being linked to MASLD.

Hepatocellular carcinoma or liver cancer is the culmination of MASLD and can follow cirrhosis, albeit studies demonstrate MASLD-related liver cancer in the absence of cirrhosis. Over the next few decades, MASLD is projected to be the leading cause for liver transplantation and/or liver cancer. A Swedish study demonstrated that it is already the leading cause of liver cancer in that country. Sobering news: alcohol intake, even in moderate doses, fast tracks this disease and is known as metabolic dysfunction and alcohol-related liver disease (MetALD).

Wide prevalence

Prevalence of MASLD has reached epidemic proportions, affecting over 200 million adults in India, and more than a billion worldwide. Unfortunately, both patients and community-based providers remain largely oblivious to this disease, both from a general lack of awareness, and the asymptomatic nature of the disease, at least early within the continuum. Diagnosis is often made late and by exclusion, and upon referral to a specialist when presentation may include fatigue, drowsiness, prominent hepatomegaly, mild encephalopathy and ascites or fluid build-up in the abdomen. At this stage, liver-specific testing can reveal progression to extensive scarring and in certain cases, hepatocellular carcinoma.

Societal awareness and effective management of this disease are under-met and urgent needs. Fortunately, endocrinologists and radiologists are becoming sensitive to this disease, judging by the number of workshops and conferences on MASLD. Radiologists can serve as first responders to this disease as they are uniquely positioned to visualise early changes in the liver.

In terms of management, a framework is emerging for the treatment of patients with MASLD. While diet and lifestyle modifications remain the first line, there are options for the patient resistant or refractory to behavioural modifications.

Sodium-glucose co-transporter-2 inhibitors and incretins are currently being prescribed to combat diabetes and obesity. The USFDA has approved two drugs, with differing mechanisms of action for treatment of MASLD-MASH. Taken together, it is anticipated that these drugs confer additive benefit.

Surveillance and aggressive management of MASLD can ensure we detect and treat any underlying disease before it is too late.

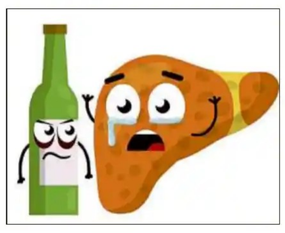
(The author is the founder and CEO of a US-based firm offering STEM research mentorship and training for students.)

How alcohol impacts your liver

DR RAJAT KESHARI

I often meet patients who tell me, "Doctor, I drink only occasionally," or "I don't drink every day, so my liver should be fine." Many are surprised when tests show significant liver damage. Alcoholic liver disease has become one of the most common and preventable liver conditions in India today. What makes it dangerous is not just alcohol itself, but the false sense of safety people have until serious damage has already occurred.

The liver processes alcohol and removes toxins from the body. With repeated alcohol intake, harmful by-products damage liver cells. Initially, fat accumulates in the liver. Over time, inflammation develops, and if drinking continues, permanent scarring known as cirrhosis can occur. This progression is often silent, and many people feel well until the disease reaches an advanced stage.



Symptoms often ignored

In the early stages, symptoms such as persistent fatigue, reduced appetite, nausea, or abdominal discomfort are subtle and frequently dismissed.

As the disease progresses, more serious signs appear including yellowing of the eyes or skin, swelling of the abdomen or legs, easy bruising or bleeding, and confusion or altered sleep patterns. These symptoms should never be ignored, especially in anyone consuming alcohol regularly.

When to see a doctor

I suggest patients seek medical advice if they drink alcohol and notice even minor but persistent health changes. Immediate consultation is essential in the presence of jaundice, abdominal swelling, vomiting of blood, black stools, or mental confusion. Simple blood tests and an ultrasound can detect liver disease early and guide treatment.

Public health concern

Alcoholic liver disease is now a leading cause of liver failure and liver-related deaths in India, affecting people in their most productive years. The social, emotional, and economic burden on families is immense, and the most concerning part is that much of this burden is preventable.

What makes a difference

I tell my patients one clear fact: once liver disease is diagnosed, complete abstinence from alcohol is not optional—it is essential. In the early stages, stopping alcohol allows the liver to recover, while in advanced disease, abstinence slows progression, reduces complications, and improves survival. Treatment and nutrition work only when alcohol is completely avoided.

Alcoholic liver disease does not develop overnight and rarely causes early warning pain. By the time severe symptoms appear, treatment options may be limited.

(The author is a gastroenterologist and hepatologist at a leading Mangaluru hospital.)

Women are trained to rein in their anger from childhood; any expression of anger needs to be "reasonable" and at the "right" decibel. This need to constantly calibrate anger can lead to exhaustion, frustration and grief, writes Tejashwini Madyal

ALL THAT RAGE: HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH

When anger doesn't find expression, it often turns into withdrawal.

From childhood, society trains girls not just to be mindful of behaviour but also of calibration. It demands purity, composure, restraint, a gaze that does not betray feeling, a voice that does not rise, and a body that does not take up space. Even anger, when it appears, must arrive at the correct decibel. From early on, girls learn how to speak, when to speak, and how much to reveal, absorbing these lessons into ideas of grace and self-control. Meanwhile, the same culture codes male anger as vitality. By framing male anger as energy and female anger as excess, society conditions girls to contain themselves and boys to occupy more space.

Calibration and exhaustion

Over time, this demand for calibration produces exhaustion. Women must carefully thread, explain, and soften their anger and must show its reasonability before it is allowed to exist.

As this continues, what remains is not the anger but the sheer exhaustion of having to explain it over and over again. Eventually, the labour of making anger understandable becomes heavier than anger itself.

Rage is not gendered, but the way it is expressed is. Dominant narratives accept a woman's anger only for the "right" reasons, where composure, selflessness, and moral restraint are applauded; when a woman expresses it on behalf of her children it is seen as selfless. However, anger connected to self, grief, and institutional injustice is tolerated.

But when rage as a response to sexism or systemic exclusions is not contained; it is either labelled as "excess" or "unnecessary". People rarely engage such anger on its own terms. Instead, they scrutinise it before they hear it. They ask: Who is it for? Is it proportionate? Does it fit existing moral expectations? When it does not, they dismiss it as excess, misread it as irrationality, or label it unnecessary.

Explains social scientist Sreeparna Chattopadhyay, "The problem is not anger itself, but anger that refuses to be contained. Institutional spaces play a determining role in this policing. Women are encouraged to advocate gently. The moment anger surfaces, it is recorded as an emotional excess and not as a critique. Once anger is framed as irrationality, its demands can be dismissed without engagement."

Feminist consciousness-raising has made women more aware that injustice is not "normal," and many respond first with anger. Activism depends on that anger. Historical feminist movements demonstrate that vociferous protest leads to tangible legal and policy change.

Anger in mythology

"Anger in Itihasa is not only a direct confrontation of injustice but often a slow burn, a moral struggle, a strategic refusal rather than mere outburst," observes author Sai Swaroopa Iyer. Figures like Draupadi and Sita do not lack fury, they refuse to let it be reduced to mere outburst. Draupadi's anger, in particular, is not an eruption but a sustained moral indictment. It does not dissipate after humiliation; it structures the very arc of the Mahabharata. "Her rage is neither hysterical nor decorative, it is ethical and political," says Iyer. In contrast to the expectation that women's anger must remain composed to remain credible, Draupadi's fury unsettles courts, kingdoms, and kinship itself. Her silence at certain moments is not compliance, but accumulation, a gathering force that refuses erasure. In this sense, her anger does not seek permission; it demands reckoning.

Rage is rage, whether felt during the times of Draupadi or in the present, as she remains an enduring archetype. "Grief and anger go hand in hand," believes Chattopadhyay. "Especially for women — only select instances are allowed to be externalised. Usually, the anger just turns inward," she observes.

When anger is denied space

What follows repeated regulation is not calm but displacement. When anger is denied space, it does not vanish; it turns into frustration, grief, or withdrawal.

Neuropsychologist Nathan Fernandez says that, "Anger is often expressed indirectly, absorbed into everyday irritability, internalised distress, or passed down relationally, moving quietly through workplaces and homes. In such contexts, silence is not the absence of anger but its containment. It marks the point at which expression feels futile and explanation too costly. What is mistaken for composure is often the residue of anger that has been disciplined out of sight." He adds, "Anger frequently appears less as outburst than as accumulated frustration, shaped by environments that discourage direct expression."

Regulated institutionally

Within institutional frameworks, anger enters spaces structured around order, process, and measurable outcomes. Organisations working in gender equity and personal safety recognise the legitimacy of women's anger, yet they must also operate within systems that demand documentation, mediation, and resolution.

"Navigating women's anger in response to systemic gender violence involves delicate emotional terrain," says Likith Raj, whose organisation works in the gender equity and personal safety sector. In these spaces, facilitators reframe anger through restorative circles, mediated dialogue, and structured listening. While inviting women to speak, they also channel that speech toward coherence, manageability, and closure. The framework does not deny anger; it regulates its form.

Even in these spaces, where women are encouraged to express their emotions, there is a constant tension between emotional expression and institutional need for calm. While restorative practices aim to channel anger into productive dialogue, they still prioritise processing and resolving issues over fully acknowledging the legitimate source of anger, systemic gender violence and oppression. This often leaves the root causes of anger unaddressed, reducing it to something that can be managed rather than something that requires change.

What happens when women's anger breaks free from carefully constructed boundaries? It is often labelled as vulgar or unseemly. The expression of anger is tolerated only when it follows societal expectations, and often "for the right reasons." The label of vulgarity is deployed to turn critique into impropriety and injustice into overreaction. Anger that refuses containment is not a failure of composure, it is often the first honest response to power.

DECODED

Gender questioning: What does it mean

If a person is unsure about their gender identity, and has not been able to express their authentic self in terms of their identity or sexuality, they are gender questioning or simply, questioning. Their identity may not be aligned to sex assigned at birth or they may not have clarity.

The exploration of one's identity can happen at any age. For some young people, the process can lead to anxiety and confusion, and it is important that parents, schools and support groups help them in the process. Questioning can also be an ongoing process, sometimes a periodic phase that can come and go, or a passing one. There are no set patterns to gender questioning and it is not a linear process. Gender transition is when the person takes the first step towards expressing themselves in the manner they feel instead of the gender they were assigned at birth. Transition can be a physical, social or mental process.

Gender questioning may not necessarily lead to a transition and could just be a phase of curiosity, in many cases. It is a process of examining one's gender identity to be able to live an authentic life.

Curated by Savitha Karthik
*(**Decoded** is a column that demystifies gender concepts and breaks them down into easy-to-understand language.)*

Travel

Rameshinder Singh Sandhu visits a sauna in the city of Tampere not just for the experience but also for insights into the Finnish way of life

Finland's SOCIAL HOTSPOTS

A typical sauna hut by a lake in Finland.

Visiting a public sauna is the perfect window into the Finnish way of life. It's the best way to get to know the locals, from children to the elderly. For many, it's also a daily ritual, labelled 'the best way to commence or wrap the day'. The Finns take the culture of sauna so seriously that they not only have saunas in their homes but also in offices, the parliament and even in several Finnish embassies.

Saunas may be ubiquitous now across the globe but they originated in Finland about 10,000 years ago. "Even the word 'sauna' is Finnish. The earliest saunas were simple pits dug into the ground and covered with animal hides, used as dwellings in cold weather. Stones were heated in a fire, and water was thrown over them to create the steam. From that, the saunas developed into smoke saunas, with no chimney. Smoke from a fire would fill the room, and once the fire burned out, the room would be ventilated before being used. Over time, these developed into wooden structures more recognisable as the saunas we know today," according to a spokesperson at Tampere's tourist information centre.

Saunas everywhere

Tampere city, which sits in southern Finland between two charming lakes, has been the 'sauna capital of the world' since 2018. There are almost 70 public saunas in Tampere and its surroundings, the biggest in Finland. Both the International Sauna Association and Finnish Sauna Society advocated the title for Tampere. In 2020, UNESCO gave Finnish sauna culture the status of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. During my three-week Finnish trip, I headed to a folk spa, a large old-fashioned wooden complex, nestled along the lake called Nasijarvi which has been the 'second home' of many since 1929.

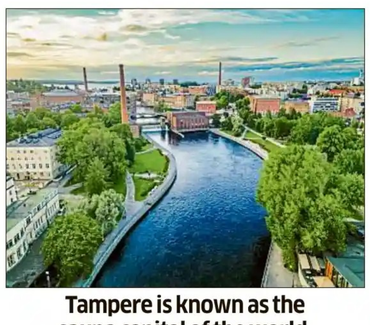
At the sauna, I was told that there would be two rooms, one with 120 degrees of temperature, the other with 100 degrees.

When I stepped into one of the sauna rooms, it was flooded with people of almost every age group. The seating was stadium styled with large wooden platforms where we sat facing each other. None cared who came in or left, who could tolerate heat or who couldn't.

As I took the plunge into the lake, it was more than I had imagined. But I managed to immerse myself fully. Before returning to the hot room again, I took a pause for a few minutes. I repeated the cycle six times, punctuating the first three times with lake dips and the other three with a cold shower inside. Every cycle made me feel lighter and calmer. The room always became instantly hotter when someone threw water on the burning stones. It also produced instant steam.

Beneficial for health

Feeling lighter and calmer was natural. According to a study led by Jari Laukkanen, a leading cardiologist and researcher, which was published in the *American Journal of Physiology*, frequent visits to the sauna (four to seven times a week) cut the risk of having a stroke by more than 50 per cent compared to weekly visits.



Tampere is known as the sauna capital of the world.

"Sauna visits also promote mental rejuvenation. The heat is believed to promote relaxation, improve circulation and aid in muscle recovery. Which is why, even our embassy in New Delhi has a sauna, used for recreation and conducting meetings. The ideas beautifully flow in sauna meetings," shares Kimmo Lahdevirta, the Finnish ambassador. Interestingly, the wood (pine) of this embassy's sauna was imported from Finland when it was constructed in 1986.

Rita Ohmeroluoma, a member of the Finnish Sauna Society explains, "Till the 1950s, sauna births were prevalent because of their hygiene. Saunas were also places where bodies of the deceased were washed before the final journey."

SWISS AND THE ART OF CHILLING

TEJA LELE

In a world of over-scheduled trips and relentless connectivity, Switzerland feels almost radical in its insistence on slowing down. The Alpine nation, known for its gorgeous peaks and storybook villages, offers the chance to slow down.

Here, trains snake through frosty valleys, church bells chime over silent streets, and fondue pots bubble by candlelight. "The Swiss even have words for this," says Elisabeth, a tour guide leading me along Zurich's riverfront. "We focus on ruhezeit, the cultural respect for quiet time, and genuss, the art of mindful enjoyment." River Limmat glints beneath the old town's spires. Locals visit badis, the city's public bathing spots, many of which transform into saunas and cosy winter cafés. "Winter isn't something we endure," says Emma Schmid, a server at a café, after placing a slice of kirschtorte (a layered cake) before me. "It's something we lean into: the stillness, the river walks, the feeling that time stretches differently when the days are short."

Adventure in the Alps

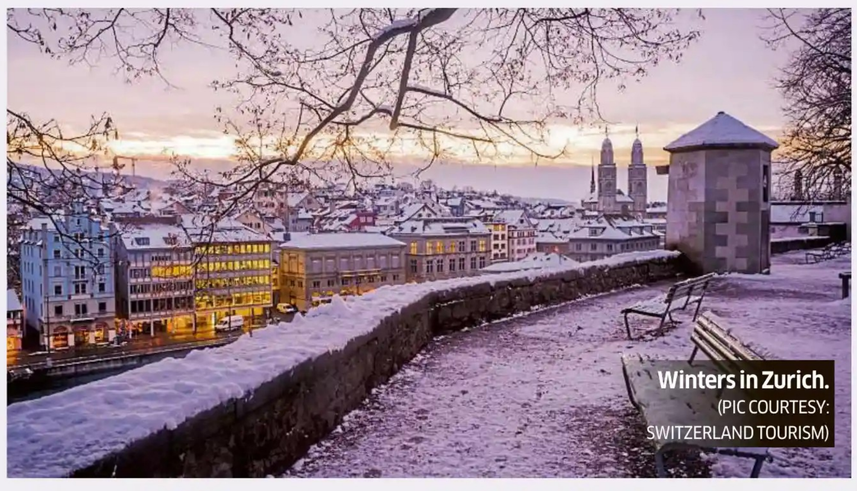
For many, Switzerland has come to mean skiing. At a sustainability-forward resort in Graubünden, the focus isn't only on sport but on balance. Guests move between activity and stillness. "I came for the snowboarding," says Daniel Keane, a visitor from Dublin, "but I left thinking about the silence, those long lift rides where it's just you, the mountains, and your breath."

Switzerland also offers a different kind of immersion: thermal spas. In Zurich, spa culture blends architecture, wellness, and the drama of winter light. At a spa within an old brewery, guests slip into stone-lined thermal pools before heading to the open-air rooftop bath. Up the hill, another spa dating back to 1899 offers icy plunge pools, meditation areas, and a Japanese-inspired sunaburo sand bath.

Travel between destinations also becomes meditative. The scenic trains — Glacier Express, Bernina Express, GoldenPass — glide across frozen rivers, through white meadows, and past villages tucked behind veils of mist. The Grand Train Tour of Switzerland links these routes into a loop, showing that travel isn't just a way to get somewhere but a way to be. Slowness seems synonymous with Swiss life. Sundays here are sacredly quiet; it's time for sonntagsruhe, Sunday rest. In cafés, you can sit for hours, dawdling over your thoughts and a schümli coffee. In a world that prizes momentum, this country reveals the joy of pausing.

SWISS-SPEAK

- **Ruhezeit:** Respect for quiet time
- **Genuss:** The art of mindful enjoyment
- **Sonntagsruhe:** Sunday rest



Winters in Zurich. (PIC COURTESY: SWITZERLAND TOURISM)

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The Northern Puzzle

Once, on a flight back from Helsinki, a group of us found ourselves deep in debate over a surprisingly simple question: What really is Scandinavia? We all know the continents of the world. But Scandinavia? Where did the term come from? Which countries belong to it? And why does the answer seem to change depending on whom you ask? That in-flight discussion stayed with me. So today, let us properly explore this fascinating region in Northern Europe that blends dramatic landscapes, layered history, and modern elegance in a way few places can.

Let us begin with the word itself. "Scandinavia" has its roots in Old Norse, the North Germanic language spoken during the Viking Age. The term is believed to derive from "Skáney," a southern region of Sweden, eventually evolving into Scandinavia, meaning roughly "the land of the peninsula." Geographically, this makes sense. The region is defined by the Scandinavian Peninsula, surrounded by the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, and the Arctic Ocean, marked by rugged coastlines and countless islands. Traditionally, Scandinavia refers to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. However, you will often hear Finland and Iceland included as well. The reason for this confusion lies in the distinction between geography and cultural identity. Geographically, Finland and Iceland are not part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Culturally and politically, however, they share strong Nordic ties. In fact, during our Veena World Tour Manager trainings, we often include Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland together when speaking of Scandinavia for ease of understanding. The debate continues, but the shared spirit of the North binds them closely.

Now that we understand what Scandinavia is, let us explore what makes it so special. Norway is known for its majestic fjords. The word "fjord" comes from the Old Norse "fj□rðr," meaning "a place where you travel across." These deep, glacially carved sea inlets once served as Viking highways. Today, cruising through them reveals towering cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and mirror-like waters. The scale is humbling. Nature here is not decorative. It is dominant. From Norway, we move east to Sweden. Sweden offers a remarkable balance between urban sophistication and wilderness. Stockholm, often called the Venice of the North, spreads across fourteen islands connected by bridges. The city feels clean, composed, and effortlessly elegant. One of its most extraordinary attractions is the Vasa Museum, home to a 17th-century warship that sank on its maiden voyage and was recovered centuries later in astonishing condition. It stands as a powerful reminder of Sweden's maritime legacy. Travel north to Swedish Lapland and the atmosphere shifts dramatically. In winter, the Northern Lights dance across dark skies. In summer, the sun barely sets. Sweden's coastline is equally fascinating. With over 260,000 islands, its archipelago creates one of the most intricate coastal landscapes in Europe. It is a paradise for sailing, island-hopping, and simply slowing down.

Then comes Denmark, where history meets design and the philosophy of "hygge" shapes daily life. Hygge represents warmth, comfort, and contentment. Copenhagen embodies this spirit through charming canals, royal palaces, and bicycle-friendly streets. Denmark is home to one of the world's oldest monarchies, with the royal family residing at Amalienborg Palace. Despite its size, Denmark quietly leads in urban planning, sustainability, and architectural innovation. It feels intimate yet forward-thinking.

Now let us address Finland and Iceland. While not always technically included in Scandinavia, they are undeniably Nordic in character. Finland is often called the Land of a Thousand Lakes, though it actually has over 180,000. Helsinki reflects modern Nordic design, clean lines, functionality, and understated elegance. Finnish culture values education, equality, and a deep connection to nature. Iceland, on the other hand, feels almost mythical. It is a land of volcanoes, glaciers, geysers, and geothermal energy. Reykjavik, the northernmost capital in the world, is vibrant despite its remote location. Much of Iceland's energy comes from geothermal sources, showcasing a remarkable harmony between natural forces and modern living.

What unites these countries is not just geography but mindset. Scandinavian societies are known for social trust, environmental awareness, minimalism in design, and balanced living. Public systems function efficiently. Cities feel orderly. Nature is respected, not overpowered. Even food reflects this simplicity, fresh seafood, berries, breads, and beautifully crafted desserts that are light yet indulgent. So what really is Scandinavia? It is geography, yes. It is culture, certainly. It is fjords, forests, bicycles, saunas, and Northern Lights. It is Viking history layered beneath modern democracy. It is quiet confidence rather than loud display. That debate on the flight from Helsinki ended without a unanimous answer, but perhaps that is the beauty of it. Scandinavia is not confined to a strict definition. It is a region that defines itself through experience. The better question is not what Scandinavia is, but when you will go and discover it for yourself.

Scandinavia

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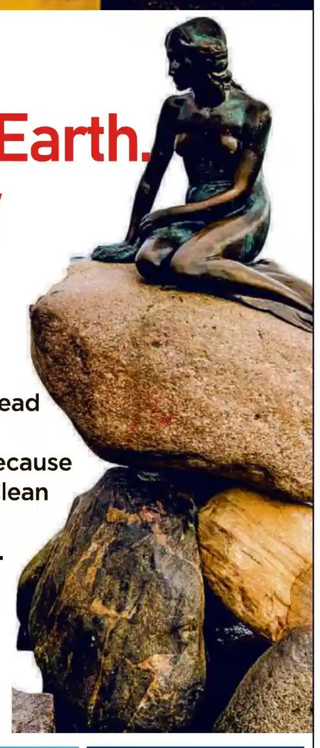
Scandinavia may seem distant, yet it has quietly shaped your everyday world. IKEA designs your spaces. Spotify fills your playlists. Volvo moves on your roads. LEGO built your childhood imagination, and Nokia once connected your first mobile conversations. Many Indians grew up reading Hans Christian Andersen's The Ugly Duckling, never realising its Danish roots. Today, Nordic clean-energy partnerships, research labs in Chennai and student exchanges deepen the bond. Different landscapes. Shared innovation. You've already lived Scandinavian. Now experience it.

Spot & Circle
the Hidden Icons of Scandinavia

- Northern Lights swirl • Viking longship
- Glass igloo • Fjord cruise boat Dala horse
- Danish windmill • Icelandic waterfall
- Arctic husky sled • Midnight Sun horizon
- Santa Claus Village cabin • Swedish

The Happiest Countries on Earth. What Do They Understand About Life?

Year after year, Nordic nations lead global happiness rankings. Not because they have more, but because they live better. Clean design. Clean air. Deep social trust. Time that belongs to family, not just work. Nature as therapy. Balance as a discipline. In Scandinavia, happiness is intentional. And perhaps, experiencing it is not just travel, it is perspective.



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Oh! I Didn't Know That

1. In parts of Norway, the sun doesn't set for nearly 70 straight days in summer.
2. You can see the Northern Lights in multiple Nordic countries, not just one.
3. Finland has more saunas than cars, almost one for every two people.
4. Iceland has no army, yet ranks among the world's safest nations.
5. Sweden produces more global pop music hits per capita than almost anywhere else.
6. Denmark consistently ranks as one of the happiest countries on Earth.
7. Some Norwegian fjords are deeper than the ocean beside them.
8. In Lapland, you can sleep under the Aurora in a heated glass igloo.
9. Iceland runs largely on energy drawn from volcanoes beneath its soil.
10. Scandinavia's tap water is so pure, bottled water is almost unnecessary.

Where Santa Claus Signs Your Family's Story

In Finnish Lapland, step into Santa Claus Village on the Arctic Circle, not a theme park, but his real winter home. Ride huskies through snow-laden forests, send postcards stamped from the Arctic, share personal moments with Santa, and watch the Northern Lights shimmer above. This isn't just a holiday. It's childhood, upgraded, with Veena World.

64 countries. A seat beside Santa in Lapland. For Veena World Tour Manager Atul Bhobe, some destinations aren't visited; they are experienced the Veena World way.

Veena World Travel Crossword
Find 10 Famous Scandinavian Destinations

B	L	U	L	R	Y	A	B	C	S
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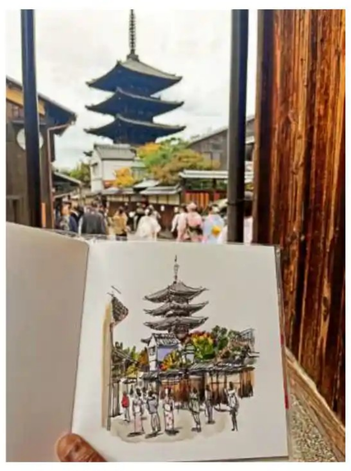
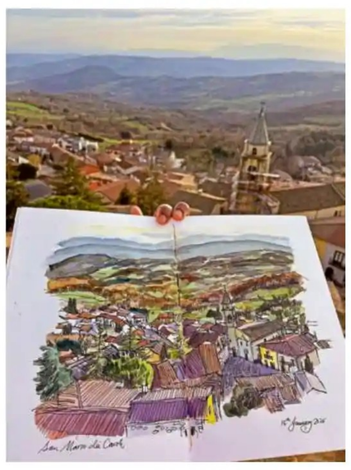


Prashant sketching in Japan.

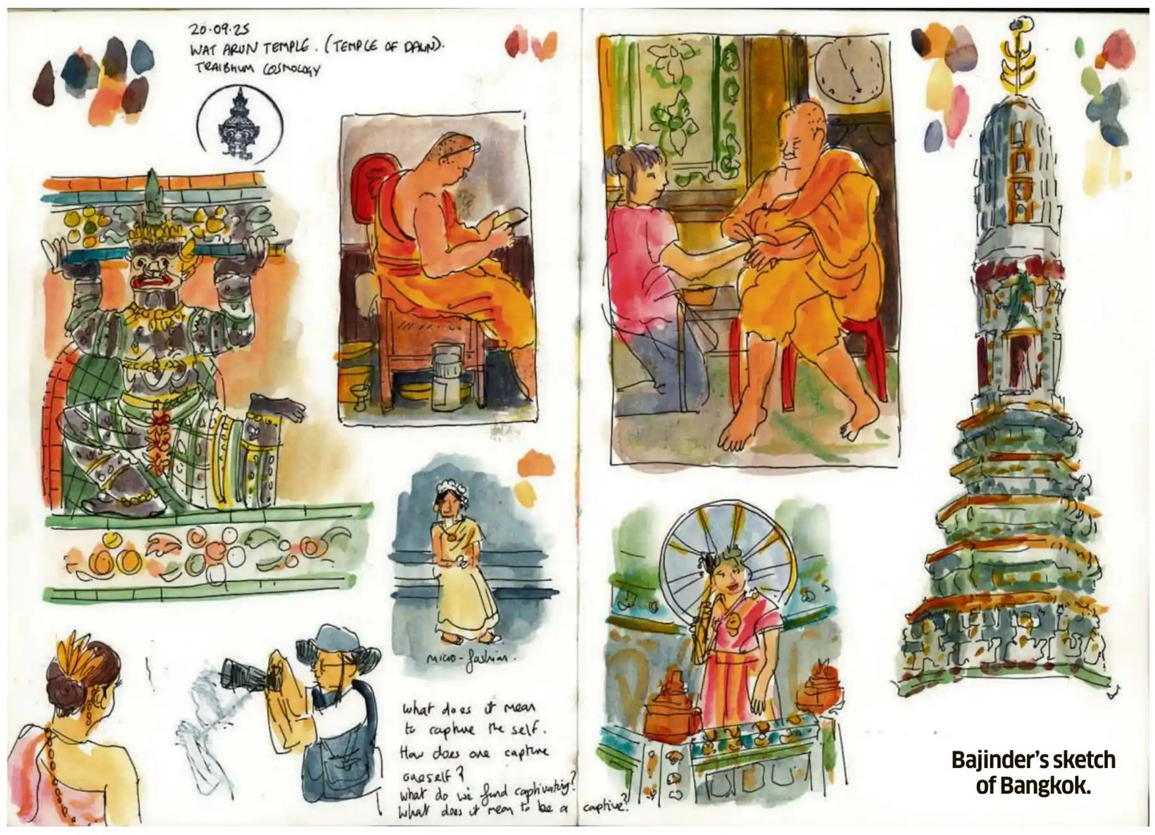


Prashant sketches the Italian countryside.

Richa Kedia's work.

Richa's wildlife sketches.

Neha Sharma's food drawings.


20.09.25
WAT ARUN TEMPLE. (TEMPLE OF DAWN).
TRAIBHUM COSMOLOGY
micro-fashion.
what does it mean to capture the self. How does one capture oneself? what do we found captivity? What does it mean to be a captive?

Bajinder's sketch of Bangkok.

Ink over instant

A few traveller-artists are setting their phones aside, opening sketchbooks instead, and choosing to linger rather than chase likes, writes Deepika Bhutra Nandal

Prashant Miranda's last sketchbook has portraits of people he met during his travels, inked writings, ancient homes with thatched roofs and other interesting things that he found in places like Japan, Canada, Italy and Hawaii. "Sketching allows me to observe things at a slower pace. It is not as fleeting as a snapshot, and I get to focus on details and colours that I wouldn't have otherwise," says Miranda, who is presently in Italy.

The 50-year-old, who grew up in Bengaluru and moved to Canada, recently visited an artist's residency in Sasama, Japan. His sketches tell a story of the traditional architecture of the village he stayed in, the local people and the nearby shrines and temples.

Autumn in Japan by Prashant.

Observe the mundane

When England-based Baljinder Kaur, 35, went to Bangkok, she came back with a sketchbook which showed her artwork depicting local monuments and temples, people doing their everyday activities (even sleeping in random places); she also stuck stamps and wrote about her own observations in it.

"Keeping a travel sketchbook helps me to be present; to deeply observe, savour, document and reflect on my experiences," says Kaur, who carried tools like a refillable ink pen, a small watercolour set of six colours, and an acrylic paint pen during her three-week travel.

For 26-year-old Mumbai-based Neha Sharma, sketching is about connecting with her inner child and finding joy, albeit in brief moments. "I believe in capturing everyday moments, travel experiences and city life through on-location sketching," says Sharma. "While photographs capture moments visually, my sketchbooks hold deeper emotional value through textures, colours, and personal details such as dates, times, locations, and cafe names," says Sharma, who studied law but now pursues a career in the arts.

Imagine sketching a reptile and drawing its scales in a sketchbook. Richa Kedia is a wildlife illustrator based in Gurgaon who is passionate about sketching and outdoor painting. Be it trees, animals, birds and landscapes — every detail inspires her as a nature enthusiast. Kedia's favourite places include Hollangpar Gibbon Sanctuary in Assam (where she sketched a rare monkey species), Rollapadu Bird Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh (which she says resembles the Savannah forests of Africa, where she captured the stunning grasslands and jumping black bucks), and the evergreen forests of Nameri Tiger Reserve in Assam. "There is moss, fungi, orchids, and climbers growing on every centimetre of the trees. It was like love at first sight," she says.

"Beauty lies in the details. That's what sketching helps you seek. But, when you only click pictures and make reels, you aren't ready to see things closely or hear the sounds, even," says Kedia, who regularly travels to Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan for sketching.

Akshatha Suryanarayana has been part of the Urban Sketchers Bengaluru chapter for eight years now and has hosted more than 30 sketch-meets. "When we sketch together, we find a common space where ideas flow freely. We inspire one another, exchange thoughts on techniques and tools, and build an artistic community," says the 36-year-old.

"When you sketch, you bring the details to life through art. You discover not just the history, but also the unique characters of each place. There is a deep sense of belonging and connection," says Suryanarayana, who loves sketching with her six-year-old as well.

"Initially, my biggest challenge was overcoming the awkwardness of live sketching in public spaces, but with time and practice, it gradually transformed into confidence," says Sharma. "I have always been asked how it takes me five or 10 minutes to do a sketch. It's not just 10 minutes — I have spent my entire life practising my art to distil my hand, eye, brain and heart coordination into those 10 minutes," adds Miranda, who has more than 300 sketchbooks.

For absolute beginners, practice is key. A short online course from reputed institutes can allow even full-time working professionals to explore this hobby. "Go for 30 days of sketching and see it as an experiment, not a challenge. The rules are simple — pick up a pen, a practice card and a timer," says Daria Bogdanova, author of the recently published book, The Drawing Habit. Bogdanova also offers worksheets that one can buy to practice anytime, anywhere.

ROOTING FOR NATURE

Where the sunbirds sing and preen...

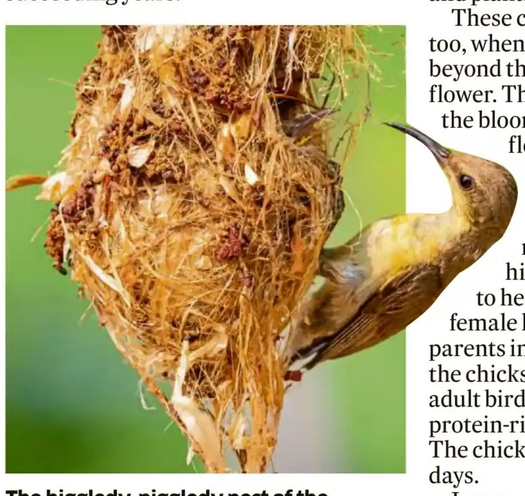
When tamarind turns amber, and work pauses mid-stride, a jewel-toned little bird stitches silk and song into a boundary tree, narrates Ramya Coushik

February and March are busy months around Navilu Kaadu. The days and nights start to get toasty right after Shivaratri habba. It is when raw, green pods on the profusion of tamarind trees scattered across fields, bunds and along winding country roads, ripen to sticky amber fruit with brittle shells.

The season is a great equaliser. Everyone from the village ironsmith, electrician and plumber, to the travelling plastic pot seller, grocer, zilla panchayat member, shepherds and cattle herders, even the local linemen, temporarily halt their full-time occupations and turn tamarind harvesting contractors. They scout the region for the best trees that hold the promise of profitable harvests and cut deals with the tree owners. Our 10 tamarind trees also draw ample attention.

Five summers ago, prospective harvesting contractors approached us. During a recce, we learned that our 10th tree at Navilu Kaadu's south-eastern boundary, with ripe tamarind pods aplenty, had house guests! A higgledy-piggledy little capsule patched together from spider silk, seed floss and fibrous plant material, with bits and bobs of dried twigs embellishing its exterior, a round hobbit entryway, and a tassel dangling beneath, hung from a slim branch. A pair of purple-rumped sunbirds was raising a family.

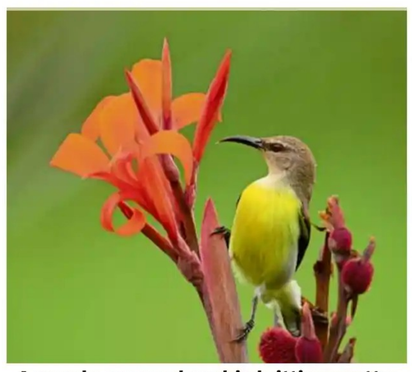
It was settled! The 10th tree with the most bountiful tamarind yield was off limits, and the nesting sunbirds needed to be left undisturbed. We decided not to lease any of our trees to the contractors, not that year and not in any of the succeeding years.



The higgledy-piggledy nest of the purple-rumped sunbird.

Purple-rumped sunbirds (*Leptocoma zeylonica*) are endemic to the Indian subcontinent. They are passerine birds (birds that perch) from the family Nectariniidae — a group that constitutes nectar-feeding birds with vibrant plumage. These sprightly little birds are the length of a five-year-old's palm, at around four inches.

The species displays sexual dimorphism — the males look distinctly different from the females. Male purple-rumped sunbirds are iridescent jewels on their wings. With ruby-red eyes, a shimmery teal crown and shoulder patch, a band around the neck and shoulders, the shade of velvety chocolate truffle, ashy russet wings, pineapple custard underbelly, and deep lilac



A purple-rumped sunbird sitting pretty.

throat and rump, these sunbird dudes are dressed for the disco!

The females keep it subtle with olive-brown wings, a white throat and a lime yellow underbelly. Pairs of sunbirds perch on the boughs of the drumstick tree (*Moringa oleifera*) by the cottage, drawing nectar from creamy drumstick blooms with their slender, arced bills. They sometimes peck at their reflection on the windowpanes of the cottage.

Navilu Kaadu hosts two species of sunbirds — the purple-rumped sunbird and the purple sunbird (*Cinnyris asiaticus*). In the latter, the male transforms into a glittering cerulean, amethyst jewel worthy of a fairy queen's tiara, during the breeding season.

Sunbirds have brush-tipped tongues to draw nectar from flowers. Their gravity-defying nectaring stances can put expert yoginis and yogis to shame. Sunbirds gather pollen dust on their crowns when drawing nectar and are prolific pollinators of flowering trees and plants.

These crafty little birds steal nectar, too, when the tantalising treat lies beyond their reach, deep within the flower. They poke a hole at the base of the bloom on the outside, dodging the flower's pollination apparatus entirely, and resort to 'nectar theft.' The female sunbird is the primary nest-builder. The male perches nearby, preening his showy plumage and singing to her in lame encouragement. The female lays a clutch of two eggs. The parents incubate the eggs by turns, and the chicks hatch in around 15 days. The adult birds nourish the nestlings with a protein-rich diet of insects and spiders. The chicks fledge (grow feathers) in 16 days.

I once watched, bewitched, as a male purple-rumped sunbird, effulgent in dappled sunlight, enjoyed a refreshing dip in dew gathered in a fig leaf on our young edible fig plant. The bird drenched in the dew shook off the droplets and did so on repeat. The sight was balm to the soul. In that moment, I wanted nothing more than to be that resplendent sunbird with a curved bill and rainbow plumage frolicking in clear, sparkling dew in a three-lobed fig leaf, and sip ambrosial wildflower nectar. Ever since, this has been my pipe dream. Truly.

Rooting For Nature *is a monthly column on an off-kilter urban family's trysts with nature on a natural farm. The author runs Green Goobé, a sustainable venture. Reach her at bluejaydiaries@gmail.com or @ramyacoushik on Instagram.*

MOTLEY GARDEN

In this season of loss and renewal, Subhashini Chandramani reflects on how forgotten seeds rise from old soil, entwining both grief and growth

Reaching again towards light

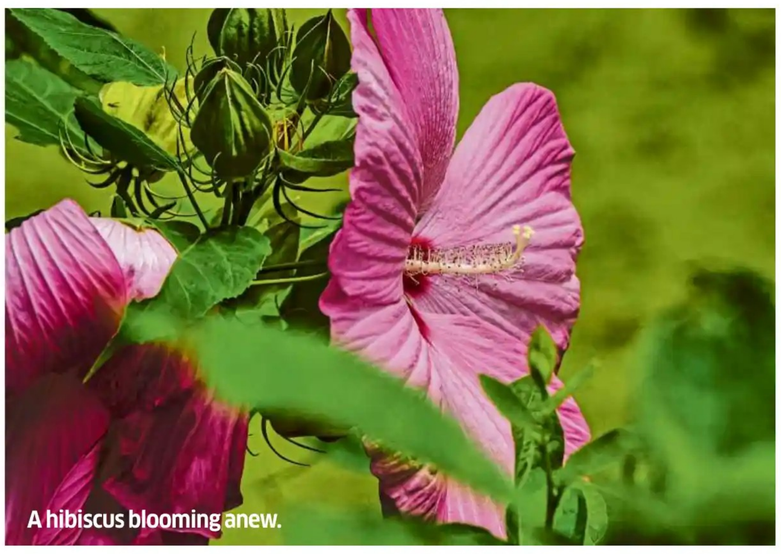
I was repotting a hibiscus last week when I spotted a familiar sapling behind it. Sandpapery leaves, slender stem: Purple Wreath (*Petrea volubilis*). I looked around and found more. Pot after pot, nearly a dozen saplings of the purple wreath had quietly taken root across the garden. The mother tree they came from had died two years ago of root rot. Yet here it was, or rather, here were a dozen versions of it, hiding in pots across the garden. The mature seeds in those papery winged sepals had quietly landed, germinated, and grown while I wasn't looking. The tree had been planning its return long before I planned mine.

I had been away from the garden for nearly three months. I lost my mother in December. Of course, I walked through the garden, watered, pulled a weed here and there. But I wasn't present in the way a garden demands. My hands were not in the soil.

February is the month of reckoning. Spring nudges at the edges. One morning, I finally picked up the secateurs. Shivaratri had arrived, and the winter leaves were falling away. The rain trees in my neighbourhood were doing the same, shedding old leaves and pushing out fresh ones. That is always a reliable cue. When local trees renew themselves, it is time to prune our garden.

I had been looking at the wilderness for weeks, knowing it needed to be cut back. The mango tree had spread its canopy wider. The bougainvillaea had new flowers. Even the birds returned, testing newly opened branches, arguing noisily. I realised that the garden doesn't need us as much as we think. It will go on without our attention. But we need it more than we know, for the garden is where many of us go to mend.

I started with the hard prune. Cutting back the overgrown, the leggy, the spent. I moved the sun-loving plants away from the mango tree's expanding shade. In their place, I started a small vegetable patch. Tired pots were refreshed with new compost and soil. A kitchen garden gives back in weeks. Seeds of palak, methi, coriander and a few vegetables were sown. The December flower (*Barleria cristata*) and vajradanti (*Barleria prionitis)* had also sprung up in many places. I moved them to fresh pots and grouped them. The two tallest Purple Wreath saplings were moved close to the wall where they could climb. The rest were potted, gifts for friends who have admired the vine's cascading lilac blooms.



A hibiscus blooming anew.

There is something about rearranging a garden that feels like rearranging your thoughts. You move things into light. You clear what has outgrown its place.

A new spot gives a plant a new perspective, and sometimes gives you one too. Old things give way to new, eventually. That's the mantra of life. My hands are proof of the work I did. They are rough and sandpapery like the Petrea leaves.

Thorn scratches are criss-crossing my arms. I sliced a finger while pruning, a sharp reminder that secateurs don't discriminate between stem and skin. The cuts burn when I wash dishes. I keep applying creams to cool and heal.

The quiet splendour of bougainvillaea...

A burst of purple!

I look forward to the weeks ahead. Mango season is around the corner, the grapes are forming, and the summer sun will coax the jasmines into bloom. The happy buzz ofbees will fill the garden.

And in all this, there will be a familiar figure missing: someone who loved the summer warmth, who plucked greens for the kitchen, who stood with a handful of jasmines while I reached for my camera.

Some seasons carry an absence you learn to garden around, the way a vine finds its way around an empty trellis. But the *Petrea volubilis* doesn't know any of this. It only knows that a seed fell into soil, and the soil was good, and the rain came, and now it is reaching for the wall.

That is enough for a plant. Maybe it is enough for me too: to put my hands back into the earth and trust that something will grow.

Until next time, happy gardening.

Motley Garden *is your monthly kaleidoscopic view into a sustainable garden ecosystem. The author believes gardens are shared spaces where plants and creatures thrive together. She can be reached at allthingsinmygarden@gmail.com or on social media at @allthingsinmygarden*

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